CHURCH SCHOOL JOURNAL
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SUNDAY SCHOOL JOURNAL for TEACHERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

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PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

NEW SERIES. JANUARY, 1881. VOL. XIII, No. 1.

God's Love.

THE following hymn by Faber, although familiar, should be repeated often and pondered carefully :—

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea,
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.

There's no place where earthly sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven;
There's no place where earthly failings
Have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

But we make his love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify his strictness
With a zeal he will not own.

Pining souls! come nearer Jesus;
Come, but come not doubting thus,
Come with faith that trusts more freely
His great tenderness for us.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.

A Step Forward.

WITH the new year let us organize a new movement. Let us draw a line between the children and the adults who now constitute the Sunday-school. Let us remove the excuse which some young people use for giving up the Sunday-school, "It is for children. We are no longer children." With the wisdom of the world, let us be wise enough to recognize the natural instincts and tastes of human nature, and as in the secular schools a distinction is made between the child and the senior, let us separate them so that the latter may find lessons and services adapted to his more mature tastes and character. Let us have a "high-school," or a "collegiate department," above the Sunday-school, into which the pupils who have attained a certain age may come. This is not only desirable and necessary, but it is entirely practicable.

We do not, indeed, recommend an immediate and violent separation between the Sunday-school and this other and higher society or department. That *may* come in due time, but the time is not yet. Let the whole biblical department of the Church—now called "Sunday-school"—remain as it is, with its primary, intermediate, and senior sections. Let all meet and sing and pray and study together as now, but within the existing organization organize a new department, with a new name, having well-defined objects, a carefully-prepared plan of operations, and let it develop within the school until such time as the school and the new movement shall be mutually benefited by a separation—if such time should *ever* arrive.

Here is the outline of a wheel within a wheel. Let us look at it again.

The Assembly.

THIS new "society," "movement," "development," or whatsoever you please to call it, which for the benefit of our older pupils we organize within the Sunday-school, must have a name. Let us call it the "Assembly." That was the name given to a separate synagogue service in the early ages—a service of consultation and discussion following the usual public service. It was a meeting of men—young and old.

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Let us call our new senior movement THE ASSEMBLY. Boys and young men who do not particularly pride themselves in being "Sunday-school scholars," in association perpetually with primary and intermediate pupils, will not object to membership in THE ASSEMBLY—made up of persons over fifteen years of age, enrolling, as it soon will, a large number of the best men and women of the community.

This plan will leave the Sunday-school proper to the juvenile work it has traditionally and really in hand. It will harmonize more perfectly with the system of gradation now recognized in all secular schools, and give advanced and mature pupils a standing in the school department of the Church. It will thus help the Sunday-school, and insure a firmer hold upon the adult element now gradually dropping out of the institution.

An Assembly Plan.

WE might adopt a plan or constitution substantially as follows:

Article 1. The ASSEMBLY of —— Church is designed to promote the higher biblical, doctrinal, and general culture of the adults and young people of the —— Church and community.

Article 2. The ASSEMBLY shall be composed of persons fifteen years of age and over, who consent to become members and who agree to conform to its regulations.

Article 3. The ASSEMBLY shall be under the direction of the "Sunday-School Board" of —— Church.

Article 4. The officers of the ASSEMBLY shall be the Pastor, President,* Secretary, Treasurer and Tutors, who shall be elected (the Pastor excepted) by the Sunday-School Board.

Article 5. The ASSEMBLY shall hold its regular sessions in connection with the Sunday-school, remaining occasionally after the dismission of the school, or meeting at other convenient hours for special sessions.

Article 6. The ASSEMBLY shall employ the International Lessons and such additional exercises in the form of lectures, "services," drills, etc., as may be adopted by the officers.

Article 7. A committee of five on "Special Work" shall be appointed by the Board, (of which committee the Pastor and President shall be ex-officio members,) and it shall be the duty of this committee to provide a library, secular and religious, for the Assembly; week-evening meetings for Lyceum lectures, scientific and literary studies, etc., and special Sunday afternoon or evening services under the control of the Pastor.

These are some of the general provisions of our plan for organizing, holding, interesting, and instructing the youth and adults of our communities. It will not be in rivalry, in any sense, with the Sunday-school, but under the same direction. Its sessions will be held, at present, in the school-room, with the school. It would be possible to dismiss it into the main audience-room after the opening exercises and allow it to remain there as long as it chose to stay for special services.

Will superintendents and pastors examine this scheme, and see if there be any hint in it for them and their churches. It is simply tentative. Test it.

* The Superintendent of the school should, whenever practicable, be President of the Assembly.

The Assembly Service.

THE pastor has organized the youth and adults over fifteen years of age into an ASSEMBLY. Occasionally the members remain after the regular Sunday-school session for a short lecture on some biblical or doctrinal theme, a new song or anthem, a conversation on work that might be done to advance the interests of the Church, or for a solemn vesper service of song and prayer.

The ASSEMBLY is invited by the pastor to meet in the Church on the fourth Sunday evening of the month for a special "Assembly Service" in lieu of the regular evening sermon. They accede and assemble.

The "Assembly Service, No. 1," is distributed. It contains a responsive service, hymns, readings from standard authors—the whole centering in one doctrine—*The Being and Attributes of God.* The rich treasures of Scripture on this subject are selected and arranged for antiphonal readings. The sublime hymns of the ages furnish stanzas of wondrous beauty and power for a service of song. Two or three young men read in turn, from fifteen or twenty of the great theologians, brief extracts setting forth in noblest language man's loftiest conceptions of God. The pastor preaches a fifteen-minute doctrinal sermon on "God." Thus the evening service is made an "Assembly service." The members of this new department are enlisted and interested in it to the white heat of enthusiasm. Substantial and sublime truths pass before the minds of our youth. The splendors of rhetoric, the weight of vigorous thought, the sweet simplicity of the Holy Scriptures, the inspiration of sublime poetry, are all enlisted in the training of our congregations.

A second monthly service brings before us the doctrine of "Sin;" a third the "Offices of Jesus Christ," and so on through twelve fundamental doctrines of evangelical Christianity.

What do our readers think of the "Assembly Service?"

The first of the series will be ready by the middle of December.

Shall we have an ASSEMBLY in your school?

Shall we try an "Assembly Service" some Sunday evening in your church?

The Day-School.

THE "day-school" keeps our boys and girls busy. When they most need the Church the "high school" holds them. It holds them by interesting them, by occupying their time and attention, and by rewarding in a variety of ways such devotion. The *esprit du corps* of the school is warmer and heartier and stronger than that of the Church. All this is well for the pupils on the intellectual side, but harmful on the spiritual side. It tends to a one-sided development. It keeps the young people away from the week-evening service of the Church during the very years when temptations to evil and infidelity are the strongest and the Church most necessary to them.

The conscientious high-school pupil will be held to the prayer-meeting, for example, by a sense of duty. Children who have been properly trained will attend church service during the week through habit, or because of parental authority. But the mass of our youth are held by no such bonds, and these are they who most need what the Church can do for them.

Would it be possible in any way to supply, through the Church lyceum, an occasional lecture or series of lecture-lessons in the line of high-school studies by which pupils might be allowed to give an evening now and then to the Church, and thus be brought into closer sympathy with it? Has the pastor no talk on literature or history which would be a help to pupils whose curriculum embraces that very theme? Is there no cultivated man in the Church or community whose services might be secured? Is all the teaching-power of a neighborhood enlisted in the school-house itself? Does the thought suggest any thing to any body?

A Golden Sabbath.

1. UP early as on other days.
2. A morning prayer.
3. Family prayer and breakfast.
4. Home review study of to-day's lesson.
5. Public service.
6. Conversation and lunch.
7. Sunday-school and Assembly.
8. Home school for Bible texts, Catechism, mother's prayer, and a look at next Sunday's lesson.
9. Conversation and tea.
10. Home songs and family prayer.
11. Evening service.
12. A night prayer.

Bible Readings.

THE *Western Christian Advocate* wisely provides a course of daily readings in the word of God. There is in Chicago a "Bible Reading and Prayer Alliance," with reading lessons indicated. The movement is a good one.

If our readers desire to engage in any such course, we call their attention to the *Western Christian Advocate*, published in Cincinnati, Ohio, by Walden & Stowe, and to the *Bible Reading and Prayer Alliance*, 150 Madison-street, Chicago, Ill.

Outline Studies on the Lessons.

BY REV. JOHN WILLIAMSON

LESSON I.—Luke 1. 5-17.

Note the Author's Preface:

1. Of what is its classical style a proof?
2. Give the meaning of "many" in its opening line.
3. Why should Luke here assume so great historical accuracy?
4. Mention his peculiar advantages for gathering information.
5. Under what circumstances may Luke and Paul have been *professionally* associated?
6. Any possible purpose in addressing his gospel to a personage so obscure?

The Lesson Story in Outline.

1. The Time.
2. The Priest.
3. The Order.
4. The Priestess.
5. The Devotement.
6. The Misfortune.
7. The Duty.
8. The Worshipers.
9. The Surprise.
10. The Distress.
11. The Praises.
12. The Spirituality.
13. The Evangelist.
14. The Herald.

The Lesson Truth in Outline.

1. Another proof of hereditary righteousness.
2. Husband and wife should walk together in mutual holiness.
3. God's choicest revelations are made to men when they are in the line of duty.
4. God especially blesses those who seek him in his temple.
5. When the priest who walks blamelessly with God ministers at the altar, the multitude of the people pray.
6. God's angels are near to those doing duty.
7. No prayer too hard for God to answer.
8. A son is sure to fill his father's heart with joy or sadness.
9. The fullness of the Holy Ghost the surest way to exclude strong drink.
10. Ability and willingness to turn man from sin to God possible for all men.

LESSON II.—Luke 1. 46-55.

Between Lessons. Luke 1. 18-45.

The Priest.

1. Doubting, verse 18.
2. Accommodated, verses 19, 20.
3. Detained, verse 21.
4. Convinced, verse 22.
5. Relieved, verse 23.
6. Delighted, verses 24, 25.

The Angel's Visit to Mary at Nazareth. His:

1. Salutation, verse 28.
2. Counsel, verses 29, 30.
3. Announcement, verses 32, 33.
4. Explanation, verses 34, 35.
5. Communication, verses 36, 37.
6. Departure, verse 38.

The Visit of Mary to Elisabeth. Verses 39-45.

Lesson Story in Outline. A Song:

1. Its Singer, verse 46.
2. Its Hearer, verse 40.
3. Its Provocation, verse 45.
4. Its Inspiration, verse 45.

5. Its Poetry.
6. Its Parallel. 1 Sam. 2. 1–10.
7. Its Piety, verse 46.
8. Its Joy, verse 47.
9. Its Thanksgiving, verse 48; Mal. 3. 12.
10. Its Ascription, verse 49; Psa. 111. 9.
11. Its Assurance, verse 50; Exod. 20. 6.
12. Its Reverence, verse 51; Psa. 98. 1.
13. Its Truthfulness, verse 52; 2 Sam. 2. 6.
14. Its Satisfaction, verse 53; Psa. 34. 10.
15. Its Hopefulness, verse 54; Psa. 98. 3.
16. Its Fulfillment, ver. 55; Gal. 3. 16.

Lesson Truth in Outline.

1. God may be sincerely worshiped in song.
2. God should be the supreme object of our devotion.
3. God often chooses lowly individuals to be his special instrumentalities.
4. God is pleased with the humility of self-depreciation.
5. God is not too great to govern and use any man.
6. God always cares for his loyal children.
7. God is ever the enemy and opponent of evil.
8. God continues to effect the downfall of evil-doers.
9. God directly distributes and withholds blessings.
10. God is discriminating in his impartiality.

LESSON III.—Luke 1. 67–79.

Between Lessons. Luke 1. 56-66.

1. The Return, v. 56.
2. The Birth, v. 57.
3. The Rejoicing, v. 58.
4. The Rite, v. 59.
5. The Name, v. 60.
6. The Remonstrance, v. 61.
7. The Appeal, v. 62.
8. The Response, v. 63.
9. The Recovery, v. 64.
10. The Surprise, v. 65.
11. The Commotion, v. 65.
12. The Soliloquy, v. 66.

The Prophetic Hymn of the Priest. Vers. 67-79.

1. Its Source, verse 67.
2. Its Warrant, verse 67; Joel 2. 28; Isa. 44. 3.
3. Its Theme, verse 68; Psa. 111. 9; Luke 7. 16.
4. Its Intelligence, verse 69; Ezek. 29. 21; Psa. 32. 17.
5. Its Authority, verse 70; Isa. 11. 1; Jer. 23. 5; Dan. 9. 14.
6. Its Faith, verse 71.
7. Its Reasoning, verse 72; Psa. 98. 3; 105. 8, 9.
8. Its Retentiveness, verse 73; Gen. 12. 3; 22. 16, 17.
9. Its Aspiration, verse 74; Heb. 9. 14; Rom. 6. 13, 22.
10. Its Purity, verse 75; Eph. 4. 24; 2 Pet. 1. 4.
11. Its Apostrophe, verse 76; Isa. 40. 3; Mal. 3. 1.
12. Its Gospel, verse 77; Mark 1. 4; Luke 3. 3.
13. Its Theology, ver. 78; Zech. 3. 8; Mal. 4. 2.
14. Its Refrain, verse 79; Isa. 9. 2; Matt. 4. 16.

Lesson Truth in Outline.—Christ's Salvation.

1. Foretold by the Holy Ghost.
2. Its source is the "Lord God of Israel."
3. Its strength is, therefore, formidable.
4. It was prophetically anticipated.
5. It carries with it Divine protection.
6. It redeems all of its promises.
7. Its Executive is Omnipotence.
8. Its promised deliverance demands our loyalty.
9. Its Messiah is of more than temporal theocratic greatness.
10. Its coming was sublimely heralded.
11. Its reality is proved by the conscious remission of sins.
12. It displays the tenderness of God.
13. It is the *real* Light of the world.
14. It is the sole plan of perfect peace.

LESSON IV.—Luke 2. 8–20.

Between Lessons. Luke 1. 80; 2. 1, 7.

Cesar's Decree.

1. Its Introduction, ver. 80.
2. Its Author, ver. 1.
3. Its Universality, ver. 1.
4. Its Import, ver 1.
5. Its Precedent, ver. 2.
6. Its Effect, ver. 3.
7. Its Requirement, ver. 4.
8. Its Subjects, ver. 5.
9. Its Incident, ver. 6.
10. Its Immortality, ver. 7.

Lesson Story in Outline. The Angel Jubilee.

1. The Participants.
2. The Locality.
3. The Glory.
4. The Consternation.
5. The Consolation.
6. The Announcement.
7. The Credential.
8. The Jubilation.
9. The Choir.
10. The Choral.
11. The Journey.
12. The Discovery.
13. The Testimony.
14. The Secrecy.
15. The Return.
16. The Piety.

Lesson Truth in Outline.

1. Await God's revelations in the discharge of duty.
2. The glory of God's presence, though invisible, is near.
3. God mercifully withholds from us the full splendor of his presence.
4. The marvel of an earthly celebration with angelic participants.
5. Angels are nearer to the secrets of the Almighty than men.
6. The angels rapturously rejoice in man's salvation.
7. Angels are used to circulate God's messages.
8. Angels must *see* before they can *reveal*.
9. These angels were in perfect harmony with God.
10. Even religious rapture is wisely evanescent.
11. Christian *duty* the rule, Christian *fervor* the exception.
12. Rationally test all proffered revelations.
13. The truth we experience we should tell.
14. Being satisfied with Christ, work for him.

LESSON V.—Luke 2. 25–35.

Between Lessons. The Sacred Ceremonial.

1. Its Origin, Gen. 17. 12; Lev. 12. 3.
2. Its Nature, Gen. 17. 11: Exod. 12. 44.
3. Its Purpose, Heb. 2. 17; Gen. 17. 14.
4. Its Subject, verse 21; Matt. 1. 21.
5. Its Fidelity, Luke 1. 31; Matt. 1. 25.
6. Its Separation, verse 22: Lev. 12. 2.
7. Its Offering, Lev. 12. 6; 1 Pet. 3. 18.
8. Its Authority, verse 23; Exod. 22. 29.
9. Its Consecration, Exod. 34. 19; Num. 3. 13.
10. Its Alternative, Lev. 12. 8; Lev. 5. 7.

Lesson Story in Outline: Simeon's Prophetic Recognition of Christ.

1. Its Author, v. 25. See Talmud.
2. Its Occasion, Matt. 2. 1–10, Acts 26. 6, 7
3. Its Unction, v. 25; Isa. 40. 1, 2; Mark 15. 43.
4. Its Authority, v. 26.
5. Its Guide, v. 27; 1 Kings 18. 12; Ezek. 3. 14.
9. Its Tenderness, v. 28.
7. Its Gratification, v. 29; so Gen. 46. 30; 2 Cor. 5. 8.
8. Its Demonstration, v. 30; Isa. 52. 10; Psa. 98. 2, 3.
9. Its Catholicity, v. 31, 32; Isa. 9. 2; Eph. 5. 8, 14.
10. Its Inadvertence, v. 33. Luke 1. 48, 49.
11. Its Antithesis, v. 34; Luke 14. 11: Psa. 18. 27.
12. Its Lamentation, v. 35; John 19. 25: Luke 24. 18.

Lesson Truth in Outline.

1. Devout minds knew the Messiah before his advent.
2. Messiah's coming had long been prophetically anticipated.
3. Before Christ was born, as since, the Holy Ghost took of the things of Christ and showed them unto believers.
4. God may directly reveal his will to any devout soul.
5. The Holy Ghost will successfully direct any one searching for Christ.
6. Let God's ordinances be observed with devout ceremonial fidelity.
7. The Spirit is most certain to lead when our faces are turned toward God's temple.
8. Let our faith enclasp our Jesus with great tenderness.
9. Let God be praised for our inestimably blessed Christ.
10. Now that Christ has come let us all "depart" the life of sin.
11. It is any man's privilege to see for himself his Redeemer.
12. Christ is indeed the Light of the whole world.
13. Christ will as surely and thoroughly confound the unbelieving as save the believing.
14. Christ's mediatorial death cost, not only himself but others, unutterable anguish.

The Uniform Berean Lessons.

BY LEWIS MEREDITH.

In spite of the marvelous progress witnessed every-where during this latter part of the nineteenth century, there are those who insist that the world is growing steadily worse. One of the most prominent examples of this kind of croaking is the fault found by some with the present system of Uniform International Sunday-School Lessons. I believe that one reason for this caviling is found in the fact that these conservatives—or fossils, which?—become so accustomed to the present mode, though regarding it from a cold, apathetic distance, that they forget the astonishing contrast between it and the method pursued under the old *régime*. A comparison of the two, side by side, could not fail, either to shame them into silence, or, if not succeeding in that, to get them labelled as incorrigibles. In a time of long and uninterrupted prosperity human nature has a weakness in the direction of a defective memory of previous unfavorable circumstances. And this is not healthy; for the inspired writers urge us to "*look* unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged."

I want to give the readers of the Journal an opportunity to "look" at a sample of the unpropitious past from which we came, which I found existing in a Sunday-school of to-day. This school I visited in the spring of 1880. It was connected with a Church made up of devout and spiritually-minded people, but a people who had steadfastly resisted the encroaching tide of Berean progress in Sunday-schools, and all the notions of Uniform Lessons, and the multiform helps to study the same. The teachers exemplified the last verse in the Book of Judges: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The very existence of the Berean International system was ignored by them; each one selected his own lesson and pursued his own plan. A personal inspection of thirteen classes disclosed the following heterogeneous choice of lessons:

No. 1. Acts 10. 19.	No. 7. John 7. 34.
No. 2. Luke 12. 31.	No. 8. Luke 13. 31.
No. 3. Rom. 5. 14.	No. 9. John 19. 25.
No. 4. Matt. 7. 12.	No. 10. Rom. 6. 6.
No. 5. John 7. 34.	No. 11. Rom. 4. 1.
No. 6. Mark 5. 1.	No. 12. Rom. 5. 1.
No. 13. John 10. 19.	

In the above it will be observed that the beginning of the lesson only is given; the class was free to take as long a lesson as they pleased. When called upon at the close to address the school, nothing could be said except in general terms. Such had been the diversity and division in attention and interest that no attempt could be made to gather into one focus the separate work of thirteen teachers, to help make lasting the impressions they had produced. One felt so vividly the lamentable absence of a "King in Israel"—some unifying power to marshal all the forces of the school under one general order.

At Home.

. . . Write down every random thought that comes to you. Thoughts caught and kept and considered grow and give blessing to the thinker.

. . . There are some Sunday-schools that remind one of the boy's answer to the question, "Is your father living?" "Yes, but he isn't *very* living. He has rheumatism all over his legs and back."

. . . A normal class has been organized in connection with the Centenary Methodist Episcopal Sabbath-school, Philadelphia. The class uses the Chautauqua course. *Instructor*, John M'Collin; *Secretary*, Miss Sarah S. Cully.

. . . A distinguished critic of the Baptist Church, high in literary repute the world over, voluntarily says: "Your *Classmate* is incomparably good." Do our readers see our *Sunday-School Classmate?* Order a specimen copy.

. . . A movement is on foot to present an elegant testimonial to Mrs. President Hayes for her fidelity to temperance principles in the White House. Miss F. E. Willard, President of the Woman's National Temperance Union, is at the head of the scheme. For a circular setting forth the plan address Miss Esther Pugh, 54 Bible House, New York. And let every body have a share in this commendable memorial.

. . . The Rev. W. Stephens, Presiding Elder of a District in St. Louis Conference, is one man among a thousand; a presiding elder for presiding elders to imitate. We have before us the programme of a Sunday-school Institute which he held on one of his circuits, and a correspondent says, "He usually does real normal work—lecturing on some phase of the Sunday-school on Saturday evening. This plan brings together the circuit very much as in the quarterly meeting of former years." All honor to the Presiding Elder Stephens!

. . . The C. L. S. C. bears good fruit in many ways. One of the best of its fruits is indicated in the following letter: "The reason for discontinuing the C. L. S. C. course is that shortly after commencing it I determined to take a collegiate course. I can say that your encouraging circulars and your list of reading have been largely instrumental in arousing my ambition to obtain an education. I am now twenty-one. A long siege of study is before me. I have not money, but good health and strong muscles. You have lost a Chautauqua student, but gained a college student. I thank you for awakening within me a desire for study."

. . . A California correspondent, reporting the success of the "Sunday-School Union Day" last May, adds: "But if we are to have (as we surely will) a Sunday-school day, then why not have a Missionary day, a Church Extension day, a Freedmen's Aid day, a Tract day? Information can be embodied in leaves to be used as those yesterday, (May 30,) that will take in that way, better than any thing ordinary pastors can prepare, and, by occupying the whole day, be a relief to pastors and a pleasant variety for the people. I think this plan would make our collections more uniform and vastly larger than now." This is worthy of thought.

. . . A lady from one of the rural districts of New York State says: "I believe that ten per cent. of the pupils in our Sunday-school are the children or grandchildren of intemperate men, and I have not courage to count the young men, once members of our Sunday-school, now far on the road to confirmed intemperance. Within a few weeks a Sunday carousal in our village was participated in by three young men, once members of our Sunday-school, sons of members of our Church; one of them was given to God in infant baptism and

early gave evidence that he was a child of God. I do not know whether long acquaintance with just such cases has made the people indifferent; I only know we are doing almost nothing to prevent other children following the same course."

Methodism in the Lessons of the First Quarter.

BY D. A. WHEDON, D.D.

As during the past two years, this series of quarterly articles will direct attention to whatever may be found in the several lessons which sustains the teachings of Methodism, both in its doctrines and its polity. It is a matter of no little consequence what one believes, for character and practice will be governed by it. A true life flows from a true faith, and a true faith must rest on the Word of God.

The lessons of the quarter are on the life of Christ as given by St. Luke, the first three preceding his birth and containing important facts recorded by no other evangelist. The first one brings before us two saintly characters of the old dispensation, Zacharias and Elisabeth, of whom it is said that they "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Chap. 1. 6. Methodism has always taught that a child of God may live without committing sin, pleasing him in all things, and steadily maintaining acceptance with him, as against the contrary doctrine that every Christian must sin more or less while on the earth. Well, here are two actual proofs of what is possible. If they, under a dispensation of less light and spiritual power, could maintain a continuous justification, doing God's whole will as they understood it and omitting no known duty, may not we who live under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit? Indeed, how truly is he a Christian at all who does not? This lesson also points out, as a feature of John the Baptist's character, that he was to be "filled with the Holy Ghost" from his birth. Chap. 1. 15. This means, at least, that from earliest infancy his soul and life were under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit. Many truly devout souls are shocked at the idea of an unconscious babe, incapable of faith, being under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and especially if it is proposed to baptize that little one in whom the blessed Spirit dwells. But here is an actual case. Are not *all* babes placed at birth under his dispensation? If they are his, why not apply the baptismal seal?

The third lesson, in the inspired prophecy of Zacharias, looks out upon the day of the Messiah as a time of a wonderful "salvation," of the glorious fulfillment of the "covenant" made with Abraham, and of the service of God then to be possible. Very likely, in Solomon's time there lived no man that did not sin; but the Gospel plan is that God be served "in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Chap. 1. 75. So Methodism teaches, and with unequivocal voice. Its doctrine of Christian perfection is a cardinal point in its creed. What has been said above on the first lesson belongs evidently to a state of justification; and every truly regenerate soul (the new birth occurring at the same moment with justification) has a power graciously given him by the Holy Spirit to overcome temptation and do all God's will. Taking "holiness" as here defining the state of the soul. it should be noted that it has its highest as well as its lowest degree. Every child of God is holy, that is, in a degree: he is born of God, and the new birth is the beginning of sanctification. Entire sanctification occurs when the soul is purified from all sinful affections, desires, and tempers, and is brought completely under the control of love; and this is another degree of holiness, attainable by faith by every believer through the atoning blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel means this for every one. With a soul thus purified and controlled, the "righteousness," or service, that follows will be easier, heartier, more absorbing, and more joyous. Nor need it be intermittent, for it belongs to "all the days of our life," from youth on to hoary age.

The fourth lesson tells us of the wonderful birth of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God. There is a perfect accord among evangelical denominations as to the meaning of this whole narrative, and also as to his character; but another class, claiming, indeed, the Christian name, reject the common Christian faith. Methodism teaches that God became incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, as stated in the second Article. This whole story is a supernatural story. Luke tells the truth in these first two chapters, or he does not. If he does not, then we may as well close the book at once, for in nothing else can he be reliable. If he does, then his record of some of the most marvelous events of human history must be accepted. It is impossible for any candid person to read these chapters and explain them in any other than their literal, historic sense, and he is compelled to believe the account or deny Luke's veracity; and we insist that Luke shall be accepted as a competent and correct historian, as Tacitus and Livy are, until he is fairly impeached. It must follow, then, as history not to be questioned, that Jesus was miraculously born of a virgin mother without a human father. Note some of the wonderful surroundings. There were four recorded angelic appearances: to Zacharias, chap. 1. 19; to Mary, at the annunciation, chap. 1. 26; to Joseph, attesting Mary's purity, Matt. 1. 20; and to the shepherds, announcing Jesus' birth, chap. 2. 9. There were three direct and specific inspirations by the Holy Spirit: of Elisabeth, chap. 1. 41; of Zacharias, chap. 1. 67; and of Simeon, chap. 2. 26. Significant names were given the child before his birth: "Jesus," "Son of the Highest," "Son of God," "The Lord," "horn [power] of salvation;" and after his birth he was called "a Saviour," "Christ," "the Lord," and "Thy Salvation." Besides, there were some things of wide publicity at the time, such as the nine months' dumbness of Zacharias, the strange story of the shepherds that spread like wildfire through Bethlehem, the thanksgiving of aged Simeon, and the oft-repeated testimony of Anna. Now, there was a time when these things began to

be told by the disciples of Jesus; and, if false, there surely must have been people enough in the hill country, at Bethlehem, and at the temple, to declare that they had never heard of any of them before, and that they were all trumped-up inventions. But no such people were ever found. Not a few still living when Jesus entered upon his public career must have remembered those wonderful things. They served as marks of identification. Surely the deniers of the miraculous conception and birth of our Lord Jesus have some stubborn facts to encounter.

We next take up the sixth lesson, on "The Boyhood of Jesus." Whatever else Jesus was, he was a boy—a truly human boy—probably undistinguishable from other boys of the neighborhood, except by his intelligence and goodness, and the marked growth of these traits. The first and last verses of the lesson show this. He had a human body that was sustained and grew as the bodies of other boys, and a human soul that was to be developed in knowledge and piety as were theirs. His divine nature was not his soul. His soul was human, like ours in all things except sin. Upon it the Holy Spirit came at the baptism, (chap. 3. 22;) it was his human soul that was "full of the Holy Ghost," (chap. 4. 1,) when, after his baptism, he was led into the wilderness to his temptation; the Spirit's power and anointing, (chap. 4. 14, 18,) in the eighth lesson, were upon his human soul; and it was the want of his human soul that caused his withdrawal into the wilderness for prayer, in the ninth lesson. Chap. 5. 16. Let us confess with the utmost freeness our Lord's humanity. But we must claim for him more. The devils confessed him more. One cried out, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God," and another, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Chap. 4. 34, 41. And his works proclaim him more. He raises to life the son of the widow of Nain, showing his power over the realm of the dead. Chap. 7. 14. His message to John, who had attested him to be the Messiah and Lamb of God, but seems to have wavered in his faith, (Lesson X, chap. 7. 22,) declares his mighty works, as with a full persuasion that they sufficiently attest his great glory. We have, moreover, two distinct acts, in the ninth (chap. 5. 20) and eleventh (chap. 7. 48) lessons, of either the most arrogant, blasphemous imposture or absolute assertions of Godhead, when he declares to the man with a palsy and to the "woman which was a sinner," "Thy sins are forgiven!" He who can thus do is truly God, for God only can forgive sins. Thus do our lessons complement one another, and reveal the glorious character of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God-man.

On lessons nine and eleven we have another word. Methodism teaches praying directly to Christ, and counsels sinners to ask him for mercy. If he be not God as well as man, such worship is idolatry, and such prayer is vain. In that case Unitarians and Universalists are right. But such prayer is not in vain, for Christ does hear and answer the prayer for forgiveness. We are therefore right, and they who refuse him worship refuse the glory that is his due.

Opening and Closing Services for the First Quarter of 1881.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. Silence.

II. Responsive Sentences. [Psa. 100.]

Supt. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

School. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing.

Supt. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;

School. We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Supt. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise:

School. Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

Supt. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting;

School. And his truth endureth to all generations.

III. Singing.

IV. The Ten Commandments.

V. Prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.

VI. Scripture Lesson.

VII. Singing.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. Class Study of the Lesson.

II. Singing Lesson Hymn.

III. Recitation of Title, Topic, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion, by the school in concert.

IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. The Supplemental Lesson.*

VI. Announcements, (especially of the Church service, and week-evening prayer-meeting.)

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. The Apostles' Creed. (All standing.)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

II. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

School. The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.

All. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

III. Dismission.

* Special Lessons in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

NOTES BY THE REV. J. L. HURLBUT, M.A.

B. C. 7.] LESSON I. ZACHARIAS AND ELISABETH; or, Righteous before God. [Jan. 2.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Four hundred years have passed away since the last promise of the Old Testament—that Elijah the prophet should appear as the forerunner of the Lord; and now when the world is ripe for its fulfillment the prophetic chain is again taken up, and a new link is added, announcing that the herald of the King is at the gates, and soon to appear. In a time of universal neglect and unbelief, while iniquity sits on the throne, and skepticism stands at the altar, and formality stalks abroad in the Church, there are yet priests who pray in sincerity, and homes where God is honored, and hearts that are waiting for the "consolation of Israel." The aged Zacharias stands with his censer in the Holy Place, and through the cloud of fragrant incense he beholds God's messenger, with angelic face, beaming by the golden altar. His rising alarm is allayed by the gentle words of his celestial visitant, and with mind too overwhelmed fully to believe, he hears the glad promise that his prayers, oft offered, are to be answered at last; his wife shall clasp a son in her withered arms, and his child shall be the destined messenger of the Lord, to take up the trumpet of prophecy, sacred from the lips of David, and Isaiah, and Malachi, and proclaim the coming of the King.

Luke 1. 5-17.

[*Memory verses* 13–16.]

5 **There was, in the days of Her'od the king of Ju-de'a, a certain priest named Zach-a-ri'as, of the course of A-bi'a: and his wife** *was* **of the daughters of Aa'ron, and her name** *was* **E-lis'-a-beth.**

1 Chron. 24. 1, 5, 7, 10: Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron....thus were they divided by lot....the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah ....the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah.

6 **And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.**

Psa. 119. 1: Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

7 **And they had no child, because that E-lis'a-beth was barren; and they both were** *now* **well stricken in years.**

8 **And it came to pass that, while he executed the priest's office before God, in the order of his course,**

9 **According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.**

10 **And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.**

Rev. 8. 4: And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God.

11 **And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.**

12 **And when Zach-a-ri'as saw** *him*, **he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.**

Rev. 1. 17: And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.

13 **But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zach-a-ri'as: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife E-lis'a-beth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.**

Dan. 10. 12: Fear not, Daniel.... thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

14 **And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.**

Explanatory and Practical.

Verse 5. Days of Herod. An Idumean by birth, the last king of Judea, and a man of great ability and force, but cruel and unscrupulous. He caused his wife Mariamne, and his own sons, to be put to death without cause, and shed much innocent blood. But, despite his crimes and the hatred of the people, he held power for nearly forty years by his political skill and the favor of the Romans. **Judea.** This word strictly refers to southern Palestine only: but Herod's realm included all the four districts of Judea, Samaria, Galilee and Perea, besides some of the surrounding provinces. **A certain priest.** The priests were descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi. Their duties were the offering of sacrifice, the care of the temple, and, to some extent, instruction in the law. **Zacharias.** His name means "remembrance of the Lord." His home was in the hill-country of Judea, (ver. 39,) probably near Hebron, which was a priestly city. **Course of Abia.** The priests were divided into twenty-four courses or classes, each of which served in the temple a week in every half-year. The course of Abia, or Abijah, was the eighth in order, and was on duty in April and October. **Daughters of Aaron.** The priests were required to choose wives from among the descendants of Aaron, that the sacred blood might remain unmixed. **Elisabeth.** The Greek form for the name Elisheba, meaning "the oath of God." As the coming Messiah sprang from the royal line of David, so the coming forerunner, from the priestly line of Aaron.

6, 7. Righteous before God. Not perfect in character, but sincere in their service of God, and that in a time of wide-spread corruption, both in Church and State. (1) *Pharisaism may seek to be righteous before men; but true piety seeks to be righteous before God.* (2) *Those who lead in the services of religion should themselves set an example of holiness.* (3) *Blessed is that home where the husband and wife are together in God's service.* **Commandments and ordinances.** One word refers to the precepts of the law, the other to the ceremonies of the Jewish Church. **Blameless.** Not with absolute sinlessness, but with heart fixed in the purpose of rectitude. **No child.** By all Orientals, childlessness is regarded as a great affliction: and to the Jews it was especially so, as each family cherished a hope that the Messiah might be found in its number.

8, 9. The priest's office. During the week of their ministration the officiating priests occupied chambers in the temple, and after it they returned home. **Before God.** In the temple where God dwelt among his people. **His lot.** The various duties connected with daily offering were assigned by lot. **To burn incense.** The incense was composed of fragrant gums and spices, held in a bowl, which was placed on the golden altar. These were lighted with coals of fire from the altar of burnt offering, and filled the Holy Place with a fragrant cloud, an emblem of the prayers of God's people. **The temple.** The third temple, built by Herod, was surrounded by four courts, one inside another, all surrounded by porticoes and open to the sky. In the innermost, called "the court of the priests," rose the temple building, divided into two parts, the Holy Place, in which stood the altar of incense and the Holy of Holies. (See plan of the temple, *Lesson Commentary*, p. 21.) The office of burning incense was regarded as so sacred that a priest was permitted to perform it but once. (4) "*The perfume was sweeter which ascended up from the hand of a just Zacharias.*"—*Bishop Hall.*

10, 11. The whole multitude. From the numbers in attendance some have supposed that this was on a Sabbath, or a feast-day. **Praying without.** While the offering was laid on the brazen altar in the priest's court, and the cloud of incense-smoke arose from the golden altar in the Holy Place, the people from the courts of Israel and of the Women, and even from the outer court of the Gentiles, lifted up their prayers. **There appeared.** This angelic appearance was the first event of the Gospel dispensation. **An angel of the Lord.** Gabriel. As we learn from ver. 19, an angel who is peculiarly the bearer of good tidings to men. **On the right side.** That is, on the south side of the altar, between it and the golden candlestick, close by the veil which covered the Holy of Holies. **The altar of incense.** Two altars were in the temple, one of bronze in the court of the priests, on which the daily sacrifice was offered; the other, covered with gold, within the Holy Place, reserved for incense. (5) *At the place of prayer God's messenger comes to answer prayer.*

15 **For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.**

Matt. 11. 9, 11 : A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet....Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.

16 **And many of the children of Is'ra-el shall he turn to the Lord their God.**

Matt. 3. 5, 6 : Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

17 **And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of E-li'as, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**

1 Kings 18. 21 : And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord *be* God, follow him. Mal. 4. 5 : Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Mark 9. 13 : I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed.

12, 13. Troubled. Men are of the earth, and, however brave, must tremble when one from the invisible world appears in their presence. In every case when angels have come to mortals, they have been beheld with fear, even by the courageous Gideon and the holy Daniel. **Fear not.** (6) *The opening words of the Gospel dispensation are words of encouragement and cheer.* **Thy prayer is heard.** The angel attests his supernatural origin by his knowledge of Zacharias' prayers, and his promise of an answer. The prayer had been for a son, and, in common with all pious Jews, for the coming of the Messiah, both of which supplications are soon to find answer. (7) *God hears our prayers even when he delays answering them.* **His name John.** "The gift of God;" a suitable name for one whose birth was thus promised, and who was to appear as God's messenger among men.

14, 15. Thou shalt have. More precisely, "And he shall be joy and gladness to thee." (8) "*The child of prayer is likely to be a source of joy to his parents.*"—*Clarke.* **Many shall rejoice.** Not "at the time of his birth," but "shall have occasion to rejoice in after years on account of his birth," ushering in the Gospel and its privileges. (9) *Every life has in it the possibility of bringing happiness to other lives.* **Great in the sight of the Lord.** As the succeeding clauses explain, great in self-conquest, great in spiritual endowment, great in power among men, and great in his mission as Christ's forerunner. (10) *Not often are the same men great in the eyes of God and of men.* **Wine.** While the use of wine was permitted to people in general, the Nazarite or a person under a vow abstained, not only from fermented wine, but even from grapes, as a mark of peculiar self-control and consecration. **Strong drink.** All stimulating liquors other than wine. **Filled with the Holy Ghost.** "Illuminated, sanctified, and guided by its influence."—*Barnes.* **From his mother's womb.** From earliest infancy under a divine influence. None may know at how early an age the Spirit enters a human heart.

16, 17. Many....shall he turn. A prediction of success which was amply verified. Matt. 3. 5, 6. **Power of Elias.** To be in his own age what Elijah had been in his, a bold preacher and a mighty reformer; and, moreover, like him in the simplicity and austerity of his habits. **Fathers to the children.** As had been prophesied in the closing words of the Old Testament. Mal. 4. 6. A figurative expression, meaning a revival of true religion among young and old. **Wisdom of the just.** True wisdom being shown by obedience to God. **To make ready.** The mission of John was to prepare the nation for the more searching words and the greater work of Christ.

HOME READINGS.

M. Zacharias and the angel. Luke 1. 5–17.
Tu. Abraham and the angel. Gen. 18. 1–10.
W. Manoah and the angel. Judges 13. 6–25.
Th. The woman and the angel. Matt. 28. 1–10.
F. Cornelius and the angel. Acts 10. 1–20.
S. Peter and the angel. Acts 12. 1–19.
S. John and the angel. Rev. 22. 1–10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke 1. 6.

LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hymnal, No. 158.

There is a safe and secret place
Beneath the wings divine,
Reserved for all the heirs of grace;
O be that refuge mine!

He feeds in pastures large and fair
Of love and truth divine;
O child of God, O glory's heir,
How rich a lot is thine!

A hand almighty to defend,
An ear for every call,
An honored life, a peaceful end,
And heaven to crown it all!

TIME.—About a year and three months before the birth of Christ, (B. C. 7,) according to the common chronology. At this time Augustus Cæsar was emperor of Rome, and Herod the Great king of Judea.

PLACE.—The temple at Jerusalem.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The ministry of angels.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Holy Pair, v. 5–7.
Who were they? When did they live?
Where was their home? v. 39, 40.
What was the vocation of Zacharias?
To what course did he belong?
What was their character?
Was such the general character of the priesthood at that time?
To what extent was this pair "blameless?"
What privilege had thus far been denied them?
What subject of their prayer is indicated in v. 13?

2. The Hour of Prayer, v. 8–10.
What was the duty of Zacharias?
Where was this duty performed?
Of what was incense a type?
How is this represented in Rev. 8. 3?
Of whom was the priest, while offering incense, a type?
How did the people show their interest in the service?
What example do we find in their conduct?
At what hour did this service take place?

3. The Heavenly Prophecy, v. 11–17.
What took place in the temple?
What is the effect of heavenly appearances upon human minds, and why?
How were the fears of Zacharias relieved?
What was the promise made to him?
What character was predicted of his son?
What was indicated by the words concerning strong drink?
What was to be John's office and work?
What influence was he to exert upon the people?

Practical Teachings.

What does this lesson show—1. As our example in character? 2. As our example in worship? 3. As our example in zeal for God?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Holy Pair, v. 5–7.
What were their names?
Where did they live? v. 39, 40.
Who was king at that time?
What was the office of Zacharias?
What is meant by "the course of Abia?"
What was the character of this couple? [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.]
What is it to be righteous before God? 2 Kings 20. 3.
How should we try to live? Phil. 2. 15.
Had Zacharias and Elisabeth any children?

2. The Hour of Prayer, v. 8–10.
What was the duty of Zacharias?
Where did he perform that duty?
In what part of the temple did he offer incense?
What was the command concerning the incense? Exod. 30. 7, 8.
What did the incense represent? [incense?
What were the people doing during the offering of
How is this illustrated in Rev. 8. 3, 4?
What should be our spirit during the public worship of God?

3. The Heavenly Prophecy, v. 11–17.
Who appeared to Zacharias, and where?
How did Zacharias feel when he saw him?
What were the first words of the angel?
What promise did the angel bring?
What does the word John mean?
What was this son destined to bring, and how?
What was said concerning his manner of life?
What is Paul's advice in Eph. 5. 18?
How was he to do good?
Whom did he represent, and wherein?
What was his work among men? [11. 9–11.
By what name was he afterward known? Matt.

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we learn—1. Obedience to God's law? 2. Prayerfulness during God's worship? 3. Earnestness in God's work?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

1. The Holy Pair, v. 5–7.
Who were the pair here mentioned? **Zacharias and Elisabeth.**
What was Zacharias? **A priest of God's house.**
When did he live? **A little while before Christ was born.**
Where was his home? **Near Hebron, in the mountains of Judea.**
What is said of Zacharias and his wife? [Repeat Golden Text.]
What is it to be righteous before God? **To try to obey God in all things.**
What are the ordinances of the Lord? **All his laws.**
Are you trying to walk in them?
What else is told us about this couple? **They were old and had no child.**

2. The Hour of Prayer, v. 8–10.
What was the duty of Zacharias as a priest? **To offer incense.**
Where did he offer incense? **In the temple at Jerusalem.**
How was the incense offered? **It was burned on the altar.**
Where were the people at this time? **In the court outside the temple.**
What were the people doing while the incense was offered? **They were praying to God.**
Do you try to pray while you are in the church with God's people?

3. The Heavenly Prophecy, v. 11–17.
Who appeared to Zacharias in the temple? **An angel of God.**
How did Zacharias feel when he saw the angel? **He was afraid.**
What did the angel say to him? **"Fear not."**
What good news did the angel bring to Zacharias? **That God had heard his prayers.**
What promise did the angel give? **That he should have a son.**
What was to be the name of this son? **John.**
What was John to bring to many people? **Joy and gladness.**
What was he to avoid? **Wine and strong drink.**
What was he to do among men? **He was to lead many to God.**
What was to be his greatest work? **To make the people ready for Christ's coming.**
What was this son afterward called? **John the Baptist.**

Words with Little People.

1. Try to do right in the sight of God. 2. Pray earnestly while you are in God's house. 3. Try to bring joy and not sorrow to others. 4. Never drink wine nor strong drink. 5. Honor old people who honor God.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Zacharias? **A priest in the time of Herod.**
2. What was his character? **He was righteous before God.**
3. Who appeared to him in the temple? **An angel of the Lord.**
4. What did the angel promise to him? **A son who should be a prophet.**
5. Who was this son? **John the Baptist.**
6. What duty do we learn from the first lesson? **Faithful obedience to God.**

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Priest and the Prophet.

I. THE PRIEST.
1. **Righteous.** "*Righteous before God.*" v. 6.
"Righteousness....of God by faith." Phil. 3. 9.
2. **Obedient.** "*Commandments....ordinances.*" v. 6.
"Blessed....undefiled....walk in the law." Psa. 119. 1.
3. **Unspotted.** "*Blameless.*" v. 6.
"Blameless and harmless, the sons of God." Phil. 2. 15.
4. **Prayerful.** "*Prayer is heard.*" v. 13.
"From the first....thy words were heard." Dan. 10. 12.

II. THE PROPHET.
1. **His Honor.** "*Great....sight....Lord.*" v. 15.
"Not....a greater than John the Baptist." Matt. 11. 11.
2. **His Self-denial.** "*Neither wine,*" *etc.* v. 15.
"Not drunk with wine, but filled....Spirit." Eph. 5. 18.
3. **His Endowment.** "*Filled....Holy Ghost.*" v. 15.
"Full of the Holy Ghost." Acts 11. 24.
4. **His Influence.** "*Many....shall he turn.*" v. 16.
"Went out to him....all Judea." Matt. 3. 5.
5. **His Work.** "*To make ready.*" v. 17.
"Behold the Lamb of God." John 1. 29.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Messages from God.

1. God's messages come to men when great events in the spiritual history of the race are about to take place.
2. God's messages come only to the righteous, whatever their state in life. v. 6.
3. God's messages come to some while in sacred duties, but to others, (the shepherds,) while in secular. v. 11.
4. God's messages begin with words of cheer and encouragement to the troubled in spirit. v. 13.
5. God's messages come as answers to prayer, unexpected, and larger than our thoughts.
6. God's messages recognize the unity of revelation, by taking up the thread of prophecy where it was broken, after four hundred years. v. 17.
7. God's messages have direct relation to Christ, the great central theme of the Gospel. v. 17.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

"WHERE were you born?" "And you?" "And you?" This would be a good question with which to open these lessons on the Gospel of Luke; and all the better because the class would certainly not see the drift of it at first. Probably scarcely one of my readers sees as yet my object in asking the question.

The answer is, "Boston," "Albany," "Chicago," etc. Then comes the question, "*How do you know?*" I can imagine the puzzled faces of the class. "How do I know, teacher?" asks a boy—as much as to say, "What *do* you mean?" "Yes," I reply; "how do you know you were born at Boston?" "Well, mother says I was." "Exactly so: she told you; you did not read it in a book, did you?" "In a book! O, no!" says my young friend, laughing. "Then," I go on, "it came to you by *oral tradition.*" The class is puzzled again; but my task is now easy, to show them that a great part of their knowledge comes, not by reading but by hearing; not by books, but by oral communication or delivery.

So it was with the knowledge of the early Christians concerning the life of their Lord, before the time when the Gospels were written. The converts of Philip in Samaria, of Peter at Cæsarea, of Bar-

nabas at Antioch—what did they know about Jesus? Of course, they heard in the first instance of his being the promised Messiah, of his rejection and death, and of his resurrection; and on this testimony they embraced the Gospel. But then how eager they would be to know more about this crucified and risen Galilean whom they accepted as their Lord and Saviour! The apostles and some others could, of course, tell them what they had seen and heard while he was yet on the earth; but as their numbers multiplied, the want seems to have been supplied by the handing on from one to another of a regular summary of teaching or "catechizing," (as the word "instructed" means in Luke 1. 4,) comprising our Lord's principal miracles, discourses, etc., and the events that led to his death. In course of time, as Luke tells us in the first verse of this chapter, "many took in hand to set forth in order" a written narrative, more or less complete, of the events thus summarized, with such additions as their individual knowledge would enable them to make. So in the present day, if a great man dies, all the newspapers give us hasty biographies of him; and we then learn facts about him which before were only known to the few who knew him, or who had opportunities of hearing from those who did. Written narrative soon supersedes oral tradition.

But this is not all. By and by, one or more complete "Lives" of the great man appear, carefully compiled after due research and inquiry, which become more or less standard works, and the newspaper sketches are forgotten. And so came the four Gospels to be written, and to survive all the other accounts. Of course, over and above this, we hold them, and them only, to be divinely inspired. But this does not affect the foregoing illustration of their origin as human compositions.

The present seems to me a good opportunity to make all this plain to our scholars. We are beginning Luke's Gospel: how came he to write it? He himself was a Gentile convert, a man of superior education, who would naturally desire to find out for himself more of the Lord's life than the current oral teaching or the incomplete accounts in circulation would tell him. There are many passagss peculiar to his Gospel which afford interesting indications of his having obtained information from special sources; but I must not now dwell on these. I refer to it merely to introduce one important fact, which does concern us in these opening lessons, namely, that from the fifth verse of the first chapter to the end of the second chapter is written in a very peculiar style, and is almost certainly a translation into Greek of a Hebrew document which did not come into the hands of Matthew and Mark, but which Luke did obtain, very probably from some of the Galilean women whom he frequently (and he alone) mentions, and who may have received it from Mary herself. Luke seems to come forward to the early Christians with his manuscript, and to say, See what I have found for you; you have never fully known about the birth of John Baptist and of Jesus; now, here it is. Now let the class look at the beginnings of the other three Gospels, and then see what we should have lost if Luke had not recovered and translated that precious fragment; and let these two chapters always be read with thankfulness to God for their preservation.

And a very striking picture it is which Luke presents to us in the opening verses of the chapter now before us. One ought really to prepare oneself for looking at it by a previous course of reading in Josephus. In his pages we see the condition of Palestine in the reign of Herod the Great. Intrigue, violence, bloodshed, continually prevailed. The massacre of the infants at Bethlehem is not mentioned, for it was but a small thing by the side of other horrors. Were there, then, no religious people? Yes, and we see them in the Gospels, making broad their phylacteries, praying at the street-corners, despising the poor and the sinful, "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" One might suppose there were no quiet, humble, godly people in the land at all. One might cry with the Psalmist, "Help, Lord! for there is not one godly man left!" And then Luke comes forward and shows us Simeon and Anna, Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elisabeth—all in this precious bit of domestic Hebrew narrative.

In mountain districts, you sometimes ascend a steep and rugged pass, where the towering rocks on either side get wilder at each step. Vegetation seems left behind, and you fancy the regions of perpetual snow must be near; when suddenly, through a dark and narrow defile, you emerge into a bright, green, smiling valley, with a meandering stream and pleasant meadows, lying up there embosomed in the mountains. I am thinking of the valley of Andermath, on the St. Gothard route over the Alps; but my American readers doubtless know of similar spots on their side the Atlantic. Just like the sight of so peaceful and unexpected a scene seems to me the picture, "in the days of Herod the king," of that good old praying couple, "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," Zacharias and Elisabeth.

Nor were they alone in their lowly godliness. Luke shows us a "whole multitude of people praying" in the temple court while Zacharias is offering within the sanctuary the incense that symbolizes their supplications as it rises with a "sweet savor" toward heaven. In that crowd, no doubt, you may see many a proud Pharisee; but is there not the mercy-seeking publican, too? and are not Simeon and Anna there, "departing not from the temple," "serving God with fastings and prayers night and day," "waiting for the consolation of Israel?" and many others like them? Might not God have said in the days of Herod as he said in the days of Ahab, "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel?"

We know there was at this time an expectation among the Jews that Messiah would soon come. And we may well believe that the cruelties of Herod, the selfish intrigues of the Sadducee priests, and the arrogance of the professedly righteous Pharisees, would lead humble people like the solitary old couple

in their home in the Judean hills to pray the more earnestly and continually that the long-deferred Promise might quickly be fulfilled. I think we see a hint of this in the angel's words to Zacharias, "Thy prayer is heard." Was that a prayer for a child? Hardly. They had given up *that* expectation, humbly submitting to the Lord's will in the matter. Was it not a prayer for Messiah? And was it not *this* prayer that was answered? True, Elisabeth did have a son; but the stress is rather on what and whom that son was to be. "Great in the sight of the Lord"—and great because he was to do exactly what Malachi had prophesied of Messiah's forerunner. Compare the angel's words in vers. 16, 17, with those of Mal. 3. 1; 4. 6, and remember Gabriel's revelation comes *next after* Malachi's in the scroll of prophecy; for during the intervening four hundred years no message came from God to man. And mark the child's divinely-given name—John—that is, "Jehovah is gracious."

But of John's mission we shall see more in another lesson. What is the practical teaching of this passage for our classes? I would put it thus: Would you like rich and unexpected blessings while you live, and a respected memory when you die? Seek not to be Herods, lordly leaders of men; but just take the quiet unnoticed position God has given you; strive to be "blameless" in it; and God's angels may have messages for you beyond all your conceptions. And suppose they bring you nothing but the assurance of God's love—is not that best of all?

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Note the condition of the world at that time, in Judea, in the Roman Empire, socially, religiously, morally, spiritually....The persons of the lesson, and character and station—Herod, Zacharias, Elisabeth, John....A description and rough diagram of the temple, showing courts, altars, and the place of the angel's appearance. ....Angels and their work....What is related elsewhere concerning Gabriel....The promise, what it included, and how it was fulfilled....The mission of John as here presented....Teachings concerning righteousness. (See Lesson Commentary, page 27.)....Lessons concerning God's messages to men. (See Additional Practical Lessons.)....Duties here taught: 1. Righteousness; 2. Prayer; 3. Faith.

References. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA OF PROSE ILLUSTRATIONS: Vol. I. 5120, 2152, 1515, 2572. Vol. II. 11525, 9084, 8645, 8021. POETICAL: 843, 2545. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK: Courses of priests, 717; Wives of priests, 748; Nazarites, 851.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY MRS. E. J. KNOWLES.

INTRODUCTORY. This is the first lesson of the year. A Happy New Year, dear children! What do you think will make this year a happy one for each of us? One says, "To be good." That is true. It always has been and always will be true that "the way to be happy is to be good." How pleasant it is to have for the first lesson of the year the story of a man and his wife who were truly good people. How do we know they were good? Listen what God's word says about them. [Class repeat Golden Text.] What were the names of these good people? Repeat after me, Zacharias, Elisabeth.

LESSON STORY. Here is a picture of the temple in Jerusalem. [Teacher may show model, or picture, or sketch upon blackboard, and describe briefly the altar of incense and its use.] Zacharias was a priest, whose duty it was to offer incense upon this altar. On this day, when our story begins, he was in the temple attending to his duty. [Bring out here the thought that the best things in life, and those which make us most truly happy, always come to us when we are doing what God wants us to do.] Zacharias was standing by the

altar, and an Angel of the Lord came and stood by him. [When we are doing God's service we always have the company of angels, though we may not see them.] This was the angel Gabriel, whose name means "the great power of God." He came from the presence of God in heaven to bring glad news to Zacharias. Zacharias was afraid when he saw the angel. So were Abraham, and Daniel, and other men of whom the Bible tells us, when angels spoke to them. If they felt so in the presence of these great and holy beings, how reverent and thoughtful should we be when we come into the presence of God in prayer, or to hear what he says to us in his word. The angel said, "Fear not, Zacharias, thy prayer is heard," and then he told him God would give him the very thing he had asked him for. What do you think that was? *A son.* Zacharias and Elisabeth had no children. A home is very lonely without little children—and they wished so much for a son. So they went to God, their Father, and asked for the thing they wished for most. The angel had come to tell them that the son should be given them, and they should call his name John, which means "the gift of God." Do you suppose God would have heard their prayer, and sent his angel to tell them this good news, if they had not been good people trying to please God? No, for the Bible says, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." [Teacher may explain in a brief word that God's covenant is to give special blessings to those who are obedient to him.] The angel also told Zacharias that his son should be "great in the sight of the Lord." That is much better than to be great in the sight of men.

LESSON THOUGHTS. 1. Our best things in life come to us when we are in the way of duty. 2. Reverence in the presence of God at worship. 3. We may ask God for whatever we want. 4. God always hears and answers our sincere prayers.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

We learn from this lesson that to be righteous before God we must keep to the line of duty, and be patient. Faith and patience go hand in hand. Prayer may not be answered immediately, but it is not forgotten, and in God's good time he will grant that which is right.

B. C. 7.] LESSON II. THE SONG OF MARY; or, Rejoicing in God. [Jan. 9.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Zacharias has finished his ministration in the temple, and at home awaits in silence the fulfillment of the angel's prophecy. In the Galilean village of Nazareth, a hundred miles to the north, is dwelling a maiden, related to Elisabeth, and named Mary. Though lowly in estate, her lineage is of the noblest, since she is a descendant of King David. She is betrothed in marriage to Joseph, a carpenter, who comes of the same royal ancestry. Six months after the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the temple, he enters Mary's dwelling, and salutes her with the wondrous tidings that the Messiah-Prince, so long expected, is at last about to come, and that she is destined to be his mother. The manner of his advent is revealed, and his name is announced to be JESUS, the Saviour. The angel also informs her of the joyful event so soon to occur in the home of her cousin Elisabeth. The maiden bows meekly to her high destiny, with all its strange accompaniments, and soon, bearing her mighty secret, hastens toward the priestly home in Judea. As she enters its door, the aged Elisabeth also feels the prophetic impulse, and in a burst of song hails her as the mother of her Lord. Mary responds in the *Magnificat* of our lesson, a strain echoing the prophecies of the Old Testament, and exulting in the triumph of God's cause over all its enemies.

Luke 1. 46-55.

[*Memory Verses*, 51-65.]

46 **And Ma'ry said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,**

Psa. 34. 3: O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

47 **And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.**

48 **For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.**

Psa. 138. 6: Though the Lord *be* high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly. Luke 11. 27: Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

49 **For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name.**

50 **And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.**

Psa. 103. 17, 18: The mercy of the Lord *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

51 **He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.**

52 **He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.**

Psa. 113. 7, 8: He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set *him* with princes. James 4. 10: Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

53 **He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.**

Isa. 65. 13: Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty.

54 **He hath holpen his servant Is'ra-el, in remembrance of *his* mercy;**

Isa. 44. 21: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

55 **As he spake to our fathers, to A'bra-ham, and to his seed for ever.**

Gen. 22. 18: In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. Gal. 3. 16, 29: Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made: ....and if ye *be* Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Explanatory and Practical.

Verse 46. Mary. The virgin mother of Jesus, she is yet almost unmentioned in the history, and few are the facts concerning her. After the birth of Christ, she appears to have had other children, (Mark 6. 3,) some of whom were afterward disciples, and even apostles. 1 Cor. 9. 5. At the crucifixion she was committed to the care of John, (John 19. 25, 26,) and appears to have been present in the company after the ascension. Acts 1. 14. She may have died at Jerusalem, or perhaps at Ephesus, after John removed to that city. **Said.** The characteristics of this hymn are just such as would naturally belong to the time when Christ was expected, as a temporal sovereign, for the Jewish people especially if not exclusively. **My soul.** "Soul" and "spirit" in these two sentences are not used in a nice psychological meaning, but poetically, to indicate the whole inner being. **Magnify the Lord.** As the bestower of the highest honor upon herself, and blessing upon the world. (1) *We too may praise God for the same Saviour with the virgin mother.*

47. Hath rejoiced. Hers was the rejoicing of faith, for the Saviour, though promised, had not yet appeared. (2) *While she praised God for a Saviour to come, we may be grateful for One who has come.* **In God my Saviour.** She not only recognizes the One who is to come as the temporal redeemer of her people, but as a Divine Being who is to save herself. (3) *Even the mother of Christ can be saved only by faith in Christ.*

48. He hath regarded. Literally, "hath looked upon." **The low estate.** Referring to condition, not to character. That God should look upon one of humble life, passing by the noble and rich, seemed to Mary wonderful; but the cave of Elijah was nearer to God's heart than the ivory house of Ahab, and the lowly cottage of Nazareth was of more importance in the eyes of heaven than the palace of Herod. (4) *God's interest is always in character, rather than station.* **All generations shall call me blessed.** A prophecy which has been more than fulfilled, since multitudes have paid to the Virgin Mary idolatrous honor which is unwarranted by Scripture.

49. 50. He that is mighty. "The Mighty One." **Done to me great things.** Both in the fact of the Saviour's coming through her, and in the manner of his birth by a virgin. **Holy is his name.** The thought of her own honor is lost in the thought of God's glory. **His mercy.** The divine grace toward the lowly. **Them that fear him.** Not with the terror of guilt, but with the loving reverence of faithful service. (5) *Those who look up to God with a filial fear, are looked upon by God with a father's favor.* **From generation to generation.** Rather, "unto generations of generations;" that is, forever. (6) *Man's favor changes, but God's abideth evermore.*

51. He hath showed. According to the Hebrew usage, in prophecy, the past tense is used for the future, as if the event foreseen had already taken place. **Strength with his arm.** The arm is referred to as the natural symbol of power. God's power was shown in triumph over his enemies by the coming of his Son. **Scattered the proud.** Her first thought was doubtless of the Edomite usurper, Herod, who was sitting on the throne of David; but the Roman conquerors of her country were also in her mind. The prophecy was fulfilled in spirit to the utmost by the triumph of the Gospel over the world. **In the imagination.** Defeating their plans contrary to all their expectations. Who in that day would have imagined that in three centuries the Romans would bow before the Son of Mary?

52, 53. Exalted them of low degree. She sees in vision the advancing cause of the Gospel, beginning with the humblest, and arising to the highest place. (7) "*Pride changed angels into devils; humility makes men as angels.*"—*Augustine.* **Filled the hungry.** Spiritual and temporal meanings are mingled here; but the thought is that God, under the Gospel, gives blessings to those who appreciate their value and seek after them, while he leaves the spiritually proud to themselves. See the example of the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount.

54, 55. Holpen. Old English for helped. Literally, "taken hold of." **Israel.** The true people of God, cast down under their enemies, are uplifted by the coming of Christ. **His mercy.** This may be translated, "That his mercy may be remembered," as a parenthetical clause. **To our fathers.** To the long line of the prophets, in promise of Christ's coming. **To Abraham.** In Gen. 12. 1-3; 13. 14-17, and elsewhere in the history of Abraham, we read the promises of God that in his seed all mankind should be blessed. After nearly twenty centuries of waiting, the promise was now to be fulfilled. (8) *God's promises, though long delayed, are certain.* **Forever.** A blessing which was to abide while the earth should stand.

HOME READINGS.

M. The song of Mary. Luke 1. 46–55.
Tu. The song of Moses. Exod. 15. 1–21.
W. The song of Deborah. Judges 5. 1–13.
Th. The song of Hannah. 1 Sam. 2. 1–10.
F. The song of the angels. Luke 2. 8–20.
S. The song of the apostles. Acts 4. 21–31.
S. The song of the redeemed. Rev. 5. 1–14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Luke 1. 46, 47.

LESSON HYMN. 7.

Hymnal, No. 25.

Thank and praise Jehovah's name;
For his mercies, firm and sure,
From eternity the same,
To eternity endure.

Praise him, ye who know his love;
Praise him from the depths beneath:
Praise him in the heights above;
Praise your Maker, all that breathe.

For his truth and mercy stand,
Past, and present, and to be,
Like the years of his right hand,
Like his own eternity.

TIME.—B. C. 7, at least six months after the events of Lesson I.

CONNECTING LINKS.—1. The annunciation to Mary. Luke 1. 26–38. 2. Mary's visit to Elisabeth. Luke 1. 39–45.

PLACE.—A village, probably Juttah, near Hebron, in the hill country of Judea.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The omnipotence of God.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Singer, v. 46. [See v. 26–45.]
Who was the singer? What was her character?
Where was her home?
Of what family was she descended?
What events had happened to her?
In what spirit did she accept her divine call?
Under what circumstances was this song uttered?
Where was she at the time?
What traits of character does this song show?

2. The Song, v. 46–55.
What in this song shows a spirit of praise to God?
Under what circumstances should we praise God? Psa. 34. 1.
How did Mary show a spirit of humility?
Whom does God especially regard? Psa. 138. 6.
What prophecy did Mary utter?
How has it been fulfilled? [Mary?
Is there any warrant in this for offering worship to
Where does this song declare the power of God?
What showed God's power?
How does God deal with the proud, and why?
Whom does God satisfy with good things?
How does this illustrate Matt. 5. 6?
What blessings and help to Israel are here referred to?
What promises of God are here referred to as fulfilled?
How are we interested in those promises?

Practical Teachings.

What does this lesson teach—1. Concerning the mercies of God? 2. Concerning the might of God? 3. Concerning the promises of God?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Singer, v. 46.
Who was Mary?
Where was her home?
What was her relation to Joseph? [ANS. She was espoused, or promised in marriage, but not yet married.]
What do v. 28 and 38 show as to her character?
Who appeared to her? vers. 26, 27.
What was promised to her? v. 35.
How did Mary receive this promise? v. 38.
What journey did she undertake? v. 39, 40.
How was she related to Elisabeth? v. 36.

2. The Song, v. 46–55.
With what words did Mary's song commence? GOLDEN TEXT.
In whom did she rejoice?
How did her song illustrate Psa. 34. 2, 3?
For what did Mary express gratitude?
How did her song show her humility?
What great things had God done for her?
What prophecy did she utter in v. 48?
How has it been fulfilled? How did God show his strength?
Who are here meant by "the mighty?"
How does God deal with such?
What is said in Luke 18. 14?
How did God bless the needy? v. 53.
What is said in Matt. 5. 6?
What kind of hunger is here meant?
How did God help his people?
How did God fulfill his promises?
What was his promise to Abraham? Gen. 22. 18.
Why do we have an interest in this song?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where are we taught in this lesson—1. That God blesses the humble in heart? 2. That God feeds the hungry in soul? 3. That God keeps all his promises to his people?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

1. The Singer, v. 46.
Who was the singer? **A young woman named Mary.**
Where did Mary live? **At Nazareth, in Galilee.**
How was she related to Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias? **She was her cousin.**
What was the character of Mary? **She loved and served God.**
Who once came to her? **An angel of God.**
What did the angel tell her? **That she should be the mother of Christ.**
What did she say to this message? **"Be it according to thy word."**
Where did Mary go after the angel's visit? **To visit her cousin Elisabeth.**
How long was the journey? **About a hundred miles.**
When did Mary speak the words of this song? **When she met Elisabeth.**

2. The Song, v. 46–55.
What was Mary's song about? **The might and the mercy of God.**
What did her song show? **Her thanks to God.**
For what did she thank God? **For the great honor God had given her.**
How had God given her honor? **By choosing her as the mother of the Saviour.**
How did she begin her song? [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.]
What words showed her gratitude? **"He that is mighty hath done to me great things."**
How should we receive all God's mercies to us? **We should be grateful, and praise his name.**
What did Mary say about God's power? **"He hath showed strength with his arm."**
How did God show his power in the coming of his Son? **By overcoming the plans of the wicked.**
What did Mary say of God's grace to the needy? **"He hath filled the hungry with good things."**
What did Mary say of the people Israel? **"He hath holpen his servant Israel."**
What does the word "holpen" mean? **Helped.**
How did God help his people? **By sending them a Saviour.**
To whom had God given a promise of mercy? **To Abraham.**
How was this promise kept? **In Christ's coming.**
To whom besides Israel has the Saviour come? **To us and to all the world.**
How should we receive him? **With grateful love.**
How should we offer our gratitude? **By praising God.**

Words with Little People.

1. Be glad that the Saviour has come to you.
2. Be grateful to God for sending you his Son.
3. Be earnest in your praise of God.
4. Be strong in believing God's promises.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Mary? **The mother of Jesus.**
2. Where was her home? **At Nazareth, in Galilee.**
3. What was the cause of her rejoicing? **The promise of Christ's birth.**
4. What did her song express? **Gratitude for God's grace.**

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Saviour of Mary's Song.

I. A DIVINE SAVIOUR.
"*God my Saviour.*" v. 47.
"God *is* my salvation." Isa. 12. 2.

II. A MIGHTY SAVIOUR.
"*He that is mighty....great things.*" v. 49.
"Able to do exceeding abundantly." Eph. 3. 20.

III. A HOLY SAVIOUR.
"*Holy is his name.*" v. 49.
"Holy and reverend *is* his name. Psa. 111. 9.

IV. A MERCIFUL SAVIOUR.
"*His mercy is on them that fear him.*" v. 50.
"Keepeth covenant and mercy." Deut. 7. 9.

V. A RIGHTEOUS SAVIOUR.
"*Put down....mighty....exalted....low.*" v. 52.
"Exalted himself.... abased.... humbleth....exalted." Luke 18. 14.

VI. A COVENANT-KEEPING SAVIOUR.
"*As he spake to our fathers.*" v. 55.
"Heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3. 29.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Causes for Thanksgiving.

1. We should praise God, not only for his mercies to the world in general, but also for his special blessings to ourselves. v. 47.
2. We should praise God for the personal benefits that we receive from the Gospel of his Son. v. 48.
3. We should praise God for the endurance, as well as for the abundance, of his mercies. v. 50.
4. We should praise God for his just dealings with the sons of men, humbling the proud, lifting up the lowly. v. 51, 52.
5. We should praise God for his abundant provision for our spiritual needs. v. 53.
6. We should praise God for fulfilling to the sons the promises made to the fathers. v. 54, 55.

English Teacher's Notes.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

You have seen a spring of water, bubbling up, fresh and sparkling, from the earth, and pouring forth the clear stream that refreshes the thirsty traveler. It is from that bubbling fountain that the Hebrew language gets its word for "prophet"—*nabi* or *nebi* or *nebby*. The word is familiar to all who have been in the East. It has come down into the colloquial Arabic of Syria and Egypt, and the people will speak to you of Nebi Moses and Nebi Daoud. There are places, too, that bear the name: for instance, Nebi Samwil, (the prophet Samuel,) the modern name of Mizpah, the well-known height north of Jerusalem.

What was the idea expressed by this word? It was that the prophet's speech was not his own; that it *bubbled up* spontaneously, so to speak, and streamed forth from his lips by virtue of a power independent of him. Our word "prophet," which comes from the Greek, fairly conveys this idea. It means not so much one that *foretells*, as one that *forth tells*. Prediction was only one part, and not the largest part, of the prophet's functions. His primary work was to tell out God's messages; and to do so, not speaking in his own words, but submitting to be an instrument by which the Divine Spirit spoke. This was what we call "inspiration." The nature of the gift is best seen in those few cases where, for a special purpose, it came to unwilling and unworthy instruments, as Balaam and King Saul. 1 Sam. 10. 9–13; 19. 19–24. They "prophesied," though they were not prophets. Inspired words *bubbled forth* from them independently of their own will.

What has all this to do with the Song of Mary? Just this: that her song was the first utterance of direct inspiration after an interval of four hundred years, and that we must think of it, not as a composition which she sat down to write, nor as improvised out of her own head, but as strictly "prophecy" in the sense of springing and streaming forth from her lips under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Only two other cases of prophetic utterance are recorded *after* the break in God's revelations when Malachi had spoken, and *before* the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, namely, the Songs of Zacharias and Simeon. It is interesting to notice that all three are preserved in this introductory section of Luke's Gospel; and all three are appointed for study in this course of lessons.

But Mary and Zacharias and Simeon were not like Balaam or Saul, unwilling or merely passive instruments. They were among those whose natural will and knowledge and imagination and affections the Spirit used and sanctified. In the Psalms and in the Prophets we find the intelligent personal utterances, both of exhortation to men and of praise and prayer to God. In these cases the speaker meant what he said, and yet he was so impelled and guided by the inspiring Spirit that his words would bubble up and burst forth, so to speak, beyond his natural powers, and in a poetical form. Thus not only are Mary's natural feelings of joy and hope expressed in her Song, but we can trace in it her familiarity with the Old Testament Scriptures. Evidently she knew the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2. 1–10) by heart, and her praises issued from her lips in like phrases. The resemblance between the two Songs will be seen at once by the most cursory reader.

It seems to me that an introduction like this will not only enhance the interest of the lesson now before us, but prepare the way for those to follow on the other two Songs, and also serve better to impress on the memory what "prophecy" was then, if the same information were given in connection with a predictive passage in the "Prophetical Books." But, coming now closer to our subject, let us think first of the singer, then of the occasion of her song, and lastly of the song itself.

I. *The Singer.* The prophetic utterance had been given of old to mighty leaders like Moses, kings lik David, princes like Jeremiah, prime ministers like Daniel. But God's sovereign choice was not confined to men like these. The Spirit is like the wind that "bloweth where it listeth," and he spoke sometimes through a plain Levite like Jahaziel, (2 Chron. 20. 14,) or a herdman like Amos, (Amos

7. 14,) and sometimes by the mouths of women. And so now He passes over rabbis and priests, even over the ordinary scribes who expounded the law in the synagogues, and comes to a young woman; one, moreover, living in a Galilean village so obscure that Josephus never mentions it, (though he names many others all around,) and with such a reputation at its near neighbor, Cana, that even guileless Nathanael could imagine nothing good coming out of it. But all the wonder ceases when we know the destiny of that young woman—to be the mother of Messiah; and of that village—to be his home for thirty years.

II. *The Occasion of the Song.* What was the occasion? Was it the birth of the holy child? No. Was it the angel's announcement that he was to be born? Not this either. It was the salutation of Elisabeth. The song was spoken, not, as we are apt to think, at Nazareth, but at the home of Zacharias in Judea. How came Mary there? Her journey thither is an interesting incident. She has received the wondrous message from God—wondrous in that it announced three wondrous things, (1) the immediate coming of Messiah as a little child, (2) her mysterious connection with that coming, and (3) the fact that the child—her child—shall have something greater even than David's throne, shall be not only Son of David, but also Son of God. She must tell some one all this; and away she goes from Galilee to Judea, to her aged kinswoman Elisabeth—just the person to confide such a matter to, even apart from the fact that she too, and the coming child of her old age, were mentioned by Gabriel as if in some way associated with the approaching Messiah. With her mind filled with conflicting emotions, Mary enters the house of Zacharias, and is met by Elisabeth with the very words the angel had addressed to her—"Blessed art thou among women!" Here, too, is a prophetic utterance, inspired (as we are told in ver. 41,) by the Spirit, even before that of Mary herself. One can imagine nothing more exactly calculated to confirm Mary's faith in the Divine message, and to fill her with joyful assurance, than this unexpected salutation. It instantly opens her lips, and from them bursts forth the song so familiar to the Church through eighteen centuries since—a song sung in the public worship of a great part of Christendom down to our own day.

III. *The Song itself.* See whom it is that Mary praises, and why.

1. She praises, (*a*) "God my Saviour." Who is meant? The child? No, she knows not enough about him yet. It is the God of Israel, the Eternal Father, that she would magnify. But why "Saviour?" Not merely in a general sense, as Preserver of men, but surely with reference to spiritual blessings. And "Saviour" in some way through the Child, for the term is evidently suggested by the name the Child is to bear—Jesus. (*b*) "He that is mighty," (ver. 49,) "to whom," as the angel said, "nothing is impossible."

2. She praises God her Saviour, the Mighty One, for his goodness—(*a*) to herself, vers. 46–49; (*b*) to all who, though like her, are "of low degree," yet, like her, "Fear him," vers. 50–53; (*c*) to Israel as a nation, according to the promise, vers. 54, 55. We are apt to be selfish even in our thanksgivings; but there is nothing selfish in Mary's thanksgivings. Is God a Saviour for her?—so is his mercy "on them that fear him," ver. 50. Has he done "great things" for her? So wherever the "strength of his arm" is needed, ver. 51. Is she, in her low estate, exalted? Others shall not be forgotten, ver. 52. Does she believe his message to her? all his ancient promises shall be fulfilled, vers. 54, 55. Can she look forward to future generations, and know that all shall "call her blessed?" (that is, regard her a happy woman, "felicitate her"—one word in the Greek—it is no prediction of the title "Blessed Virgin.") Well, but she thinks not of her own fame only in that distant future, but of God's mercy manifested "from generation to generation," ver. 50.

I would suggest that the application of this lesson start from the word "handmaiden," ver. 48. It means literally a female slave, one wholly at the disposal of her master. It was Mary's own expression of self-dedication to God in ver. 38, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word," she yields herself wholly up to the divine will. *That* is the way to be "blessed among men" or "among women." For as Jesus himself said, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, *and mother*."

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw a rough map of Palestine, locating Nazareth, Jerusalem, and Hebron....Give a word-picture of the annunciation to Mary... The character of the mother of Jesus as far as shown in Scripture....Describe her journey to visit Elisabeth....The subjects of her song. Characteristics of the song: 1.) Devotional; 2.) Thankful; 3.) Personal, for individual blessings; 4.) National; 5.) Believing....The divine nature and character as here presented... God's dealings with men as here shown. ... How may we find here occasions for our gratitude?

References. FOSTER'S PROSE: Vol. I. 4909, 4910, 4513. Vol. II. 10038, 9081, 11058. POETICAL: 1510, 1482.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

REVIEW. Outline the altar of incense on the board. Ask what it is, its use, where found, who stood by it on a certain day, his work, his character, etc. Speak of the angel's coming, his promise, and his words about John. Call back also the special teachings of the lesson.

LESSON THOUGHT. (Print on board.) "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." To be taught: 1.) The Son of God, the Saviour, comes to each one of us. 2.) We should praise God for his gift, as Mary did. 3.) All our good things come from God. 4.) They only are "blessed" who believe.

1. Interest the children in Mary, her home, circumstances, betrothal to Joseph, her simple and devout character. God sees and knows all who love to please him, though they may be poor and unknown. The angel sent by God came to a pure-hearted, lowly maiden, and told her what was to be given to her. At first she was afraid, but then she remembered that God will not send any thing to harm his children, and she believed all he said and was glad. That is the way in which we should receive the news that Jesus has come to be our Saviour. [Teach Lesson Thought, and tell that it is in God's word, or better, read it from the Bible.]

2. Tell of Mary's visit to Elisabeth. What do we do when we hear good news? What had Mary heard? Who else had been promised a son? Yes, Elisabeth,

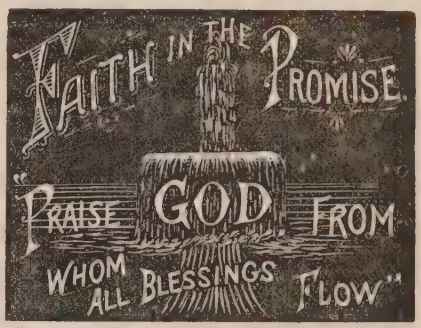
Mary's cousin. Mary went a long way, as much as a hundred miles, to tell Elisabeth, and when she found that Elisabeth already knew what joy and blessing were promised to her, she broke out into a song of praise. When do you sing? When you are sorry? No; a glad song comes from a glad heart. Why did Mary sing? Because Jesus was coming! To whom besides has he come? [Write names of several of the class on board, and impress the truth that he has come to be born in *every heart.* Recite Lesson Thought.] Then we ought all to sing for joy! Let the song be chanted if possible, children following leader, clause by clause. If this is impracticable, let the class recite it after the teacher.

3. Outline a table on the board with dishes standing upon it. Talk about hungry people, and show what it is to be hungry in heart. The child who "wants to be good" is hungry. Print "Good Things" above the table, and get children to name the good things God gives. It will please them to name the dishes. Teach that only hungry people want to eat. If a child thinks he is good enough, God cannot give him any of his good things. Read verse 53.

4. Tell what Elisabeth said to Mary, "Blessed is she that believed," and illustrate by simple story. Mary believed God and was glad. If we believe him, and take his gift, we shall be glad and happy forever.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The song of Mary is a song of faith in God's promise. He is the fount of every blessing. We should join in praising God to-day.

MY REDEEMER!

Promised from God!
Revealed to me!
All love to THEE is found.
In anthem grand, and
Sweetest song, my
Endless praise should sound.

B. C. 6.] LESSON III. PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS; or, The Dayspring from on High. [Jan. 16.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The hour foretold by the angel in the temple has come, and the aged Elisabeth presses her child to her bosom, while her friends present their congratulations to her as a mother in Israel. During months of waiting Zacharias has sat in silence, unable to speak or hear, as the penalty for doubting the angel's word, but when the infant receives its name, "John, the gift of God," the lost power returns, and with unloosed tongue the father gives thanks to God. Around the hills of Judah the glad news is borne, and a wondrous future is expected from this child of prophecy. The inspiration which has rested upon Mary and Elisabeth seizes Zacharias in turn, and he, too, pours out a strain of exultant song. His joy over his own child is forgotten in the thought of the coming One, of whom that child is the destined herald and forerunner. Overborne by the divine power, he pictures the redemption which is to lift up God's Israel from the dust, in glowing sentences whose fullness of meaning he did not himself comprehend, and whose complete fulfillment is reserved to the day when the kingdoms of this world shall bow before the scepter of Christ Jesus.

Luke 1. 67-79.

[*Memory Verses*, 76-79.]

67 **And his father Zach-a-ri'as was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,**

68 **Blessed** *be* **the Lord God of Is'ra-el; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,**

69 **And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant Da'vid:**

Ezek. 29. 21: In that day will I cause the horn of the house of David to bud forth. Luke 3. 23, 31: And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli....which was *the son* of David. Matt. 1. 1: Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

70 **As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:**

71 **That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;**

72 **To perform the mercy** *prom-*

Explanatory and Practical.

Verse 67. His father Zacharias. See notes on Lesson I. Zacharias has just been set free from the dumbness which he had suffered for not believing the angel, and his first use of his recovered speech is to give praise to God. **Filled with the Holy Ghost.** None may be able precisely to draw the line between an enthusiasm on religious subjects, which is human, and inspiration, which is supernatural and divine: but both are evidently mingled in this song. **Prophesied.** This word is used in Scripture of all inspired utterances, and perhaps of any religious teaching; but in this song there is prophetic prediction of coming events, controlled by a divine influence, and doubtless not fully understood by the speaker; for the full meaning of prophecy cannot be realized until its fulfillment.

68. Blessed be the Lord. This song is an ascription of praise to God, not, as might be expected, for his own restoration to powers of speech, nor for the birth of his son, but for the coming of the Redeemer, whom that son is to proclaim. (1) *We are not to put our own interests in comparison with those of the kingdom, even in our praises.* **God of Israel.** The song is throughout thoroughly Israelitish in its tone, for the great truth of Gentile redemption had not yet been revealed. (2) *God's Israel is now the universal Church of his Son.* **Visited and redeemed.** "Hath looked after and wrought redemption for." Probably Zacharias did not realize the deeper meaning of a *ransom* in the word "redeemed," yet that is just what Christ gave for men by his own offering of himself. (3) *When God looks upon his people it is for their redemption.*

69, 70. Hath raised up. The past tense is used prophetically, regarding future events as having already taken place. (4) *Faith gives substance and reality to God's promises, and counts them as fulfilled.* **An horn of salvation.** From its prominence and strength on animals the horn early became a symbol of power; hence this is a figurative expression for "a mighty,

ised **to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;**

73 **The oath which he sware to our father A/bra-ham,**

Acts 3. 25, 26: Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

74 **That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,**

75 **In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.**

Rom. 8. 15: Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

76 **And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;**

77 **To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,**

Luke 3. 3: [John] came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

78 **Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,**

79 **To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Mal. 4. 2: Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. Isa. 9. 2: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. John 1. 4: In him was life: and the life was the light of men. Isa. 32. 17: And the work of righteousness shall be peace.

wonderful salvation." **House of....David.** The Saviour promised was to come through the royal line of David, to which Mary belonged. **By the mouth of his holy prophets.** Though the prophet's lips uttered the words, it was the mind of God that spoke them. (5) *Christ is the central theme of Old Testament prophecy.* **Since the world began.** Though the prophetic order dates from the days of the Israelites, yet prophecies were given in every age, from the first promise in Eden, growing more and more clear to the final predictions of Malachi. (6) *God has never left the world without its witnesses to Christ.*

71, 72, 73. Saved from our enemies. For six centuries the Jews had scarcely enjoyed even a semblance of political liberty. Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans, in turn had been their masters; and their first thought of a Saviour was of one who should set them free from the galling foreign yoke. (7) *We, too, have an enemy, who holds us his slaves until Christ gives us liberty.* **To perform the mercy.** That is, to fulfill the promises of mercy, which had been made to the fathers of the Jewish people. (8) *Let us remember that God's promises are given, not as our right, but as pure mercy.* **His holy covenant, his oath.** The oath, the covenant with Abraham, in which God had sworn with an oath, by himself, (Heb. 6. 13, 14,) that he would bless Abraham and his seed. Fulfilled measurably in the history of Israel, it was fulfilled completely in the coming of Christ. [*Teacher*, impress the thought that *we* have an interest in that ancient promise to Abraham.]

74, 75. Delivered. Literally "snatched," a sudden, wonderful deliverance from foes. **Serve him without fear.** Not without fear of God, which is the basis of all true service, but without fear of enemies and their persecutions. **Holiness and righteousness.** Holiness here means fidelity in duties toward God; righteousness, a just conduct toward men. (9) *True religion has requirements in relation to our fellow men, as well as in relation to our God.* **Before him.** Ever keeping in mind the divine eye resting upon us. **All the days of our life.** (10) *He who enlists in the Lord's army must be a soldier for life.*

76. And thou, child. John the Baptist, who is here referred to, for the first and only time in the song. **Prophet of the Highest.** The "Most High" is a term applied in Scripture to God alone; hence in applying this title to Christ Zacharias prophetically recognized his divinity. **Go before the face of the Lord.** John's mission was to proclaim the near approach of Christ and to lead the people to repentance, which would fit them to receive him.

77, 78. To give knowledge of salvation. John the Baptist, who is here referred to, did not directly preach to men how to be saved; but rather showed their need of salvation in their sinful state and their duty to repent, which would fit them to hear from Christ the way to find remission of sins. **By the remission.** Rather, "*in* the remission of sins." The word literally means "a letting go," that is, of the sinner from the penalty of his sins. **Through the tender mercy.** The motive which prompts to salvation of a guilty world can be no other than love and pity. **The dayspring from on high.** The dawn or sunrise, here used as an emblem of Christ, who comes as the world's light. A light (1) reveals the condition of the world and the heart, (2) brings hope of salvation, (3) directs to the way of salvation, (4) gladdens the heart.

9. Them that sit in darkness. To all the world, hidden in the shadows of sin, Christ comes to bring hope and liberty. **Shadow of death.** With the certainty of death overhanging them as a dark cloud. **To guide our feet.** The light is the traveler's best and surest guide: so Christ as a sun lights up the path to heaven, and points us in the way of peace.

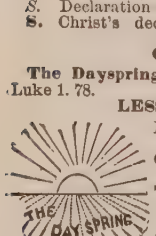
HOME READINGS.

M. The prophecy of Zacharias. Luke 1. 67–79.
Tu. The birth of John the Baptist. Luke 1. 57–66.
W. The prophet Elijah. 1 Kings 18. 20–39.
Th. Isaiah's prediction of John. Isa. 40. 1–11.
F. Malachi's prediction of John. Mal. 4. 1–6.
S. Declaration of John the Baptist. John 1. 6–23.
S. Christ's declaration concerning John. Matt. 11. 2–14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The Dayspring from on high hath visited us. Luke 1. 78.

LESSON HYMN. 8, 7. D.



Light of those whose dreary dwelling
Borders on the shades of death,
Come, and, by thyself revealing,
Dissipate the clouds beneath.
Thou, new heaven and earth's Creator,
In our deepest darkness rise:
Scattering all the night of nature,
Pouring day upon our eyes.

Still we wait for thine appearing;
Life and joy thy beams impart.
Chasing all our fears, and cheering
Every poor, benighted heart.
Come, and manifest thy favor
To our ruined, guilty race;
Come, thou universal Saviour;
Come, and bring the gospel grace.

TIME.—B. C. 6, or six months before the birth of Christ.

CONNECTING LINKS.—1. Mary's return to Nazareth. Luke 1. 56. 2. The birth and naming of John the Baptist. Luke 1. 57–66.

PLACE.—Probably Juttah, a village in the hill country of Judea, not far from Hebron.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The faithfulness of God.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Redeemer, v. 67–75.
Who was Zacharias?
What had happened to him? v. 20.
When was his tongue loosed?
How did this event show a divine influence?
What inspired this song of Zacharias?
What predictions of the future does it contain?
What is its most prominent theme?
What does it show concerning the Redeemer?
What is meant by "an horn of salvation?"
How was this through the house of David?
What prophets are here referred to? Gen. 49. 10; Jer. 23. 5, 6.
What covenant is here mentioned? Gen. 22. 16, 17.
What was the character of that covenant?
What kind of service is here described?

2. The Forerunner, v. 76–79.
What forerunner is here referred to?
What was the mission of John?
What prophecy did he fulfill? Isa. 40. 3.
What is meant by the remission of sins?
How may we obtain remission? Acts 5. 31.
What motive for salvation is named in v. 78?
By what name is Christ called in the GOLDEN TEXT?

How does this name apply to Christ? 2 Cor. 4. 6.
What privileges of salvation are named in v. 79?
In what respects is the gospel a way of peace?

Practical Teachings.

What are the teachings of this lesson—1. Concerning the promise of God? 2. Concerning the means of salvation? 3. Concerning the privileges of salvation?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Redeemer, v. 67–75.
Who was Zacharias? [See Lesson I.]
What had been his condition for some time?
When was he enabled to speak? v. 63, 64.
What power came upon him?
How did this fulfill Joel 2. 28?
For what did he praise God?
What is meant by "an horn of salvation?"
What is here referred to?
Where had his coming been foretold? Gen. 49. 10.
What is predicted concerning the Redeemer in v. 71, 72?
With whom had this covenant been made? Psa. 105. 8, 9.
In what respect should we serve God "without fear?"
How should we walk before God? v. 75.
What is said in 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16?

2. The Forerunner, v. 76–79.
Of what forerunner did Zacharias speak?
What did he call him?
What work did he foretell concerning this prophet?
How was this fulfilled? Matt. 3. 1–3.
How was John to prepare the way for Christ? v. 77.
What is "the remission of sins?"
Through whom may we obtain remission? Acts 5. 31.
From what does this privilege of remission come?
How is this declared in John 3. 16?
What is Christ called in the GOLDEN TEXT?
What is declared of him in v. 79?
Into what path will he guide us?
What is proclaimed in Isa. 54. 13?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we learn—1. That God visits his people? 2. That God keeps his covenants? 3. That God will guide us to peace?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

1. The Redeemer, v. 67–75.
Who gave this prophecy? **Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.**
When did he give it? **Soon after John the Baptist was born.**
What had happened to Zacharias after the visit of the angel? **He had been dumb.**
Why had this happened to him? **Because he did not believe the angel's promise.**
When was he able to speak again? **When John was born.**
What did he then speak? **The words of this prophecy.**
How did he begin his prophecy? **With praise to God.**
For what did he praise God? **For sending a Redeemer.**
What Redeemer has God sent? **His Son, Jesus Christ.**
From what does the Redeemer save men? **From sin.**
For what besides did Zacharias praise God? **For keeping his promise of mercy.**
To whom had God given promises? **To Abraham.**
How did Zacharias say that God should be served? **In holiness and righteousness.**

2. The Forerunner, v. 75–79.
What is a forerunner? **One who goes before to make ready for another.**
Of what forerunner did Zacharias speak? **Of John the Baptist.**
Before whom did John go? **Before Jesus Christ.**
What work did John do for Christ? **He made the people ready for him.**
How did he make the people ready? **By telling them to turn from their sins.**
By what name did Zacharias speak of Christ? [GOLDEN TEXT.]
What is the "dayspring?" **The sunrise.**
How is Christ the dayspring or sunrise? **Because he brings light to men.**
Where does he guide our feet? **Into the way of peace.**
How may we describe Zacharias' song? **A song of sunrise, light, and peace.**

Words with Little People.

1. Praise God for giving you a Redeemer. 2. Let him lead you into the way of peace. 3. Seek to have your sins forgiven. 4. Serve God all the days of your life.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. When did Zacharias prophesy? **At the birth of John the Baptist.**
2. With what was he filled? **With the Holy Ghost.**
3. What did he utter? **Words of praise and prophecy.**
4. For what did he praise God? **For visiting and redeeming his people.**
5. What did he declare that John should be called? **The prophet of the Highest.**
6. What is taught us in the third lesson? **Faith in God's promises.**

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Vision of Salvation.

I. A DIVINE SALVATION.
The Lord God....hath visited....redeemed. v. 68.
"Who, being in the form of God." Phil. 2. 6.

II. A MIGHTY SALVATION.
An horn of salvation for us. v. 69.
"The horn of the house of Israel." Ezek. 29. 21.

III. A ROYAL SALVATION.
In the house of....David. v. 69.
"Jesus Christ, the son of David." Matt. 1. 1.

IV. A PROMISED SALVATION.
Spake by....his holy prophets. v. 70.
"Spake in time past....by the prophets." Heb. 1. 1.

V. A FEARLESS SALVATION.
Might serve him without fear. v. 74.
"Not....the spirit of bondage." Rom. 8. 15.

VI. A LOVING SALVATION.
Through the tender mercy of our God. v. 78.
"In this ...manifested....love." 1 John 4. 9.

VII. AN ENLIGHTENING SALVATION.
To give light to them....in darkness, v. 79.
"I am the light of the world." John 8. 12.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

(From what Christ saves us.)

1. Christ saves us from sin and its penalty, by purchasing redemption for us. v. 68.
2. Christ saves us from the power of our foes, especially from Satan, the enemy of our souls. v. 71.
3. Christ saves us from fear, by the glad consciousness that we are sons of God. v. 74.
4. Christ saves us from slavery, by the freedom of his service. v. 74.
5. Christ saves us from iniquity, by giving us power to live righteous lives. v. 75.
6. Christ saves us from judgment, by the remission of our sins. v. 77.
7. Christ saves from ignorance, by giving light upon the way of life. v. 79.

English Teacher's Notes.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

IN the Episcopal Church of England we have what are called "visitations," at which the bishop calls over the roll of his clergy, collects certain returns from them, and delivers his "charge" to them—generally a long and elaborate address on the Church topics of the day. I suppose that something analogous may prevail in the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, for whose JOURNAL I am writing. Each of our ancient colleges, too, at Oxford and Cambridge, and of our more modern theological colleges, has a "visitor." This is generally a merely nominal and honorary office, and the holder (usually a bishop) has no real authority over the principal; but the name will help to illustrate my point. The word "visiting," in these cases, conveys something of the idea of inspection on the

part of a superior. It is not merely *going to see*, as Englishmen "visit" America, and Americans "visit" Europe.

The word has other technical uses. "I am going to Scotland on a visit;" this does not mean simply a visit to Scotland to see the country, but, more definitely, to see a friend there and stay in his house. Thus, when Paul tells the Galatians (chap. 1. 18,) that he went to Jerusalem "to see Peter," the Greek word means to sojourn with him, and for this the best English equivalent would be "to visit." Or, again, the minister of an English congregation will say, "I have so many Sunday-school teachers, so many 'visitors,'" and so on; and here the "visitor," or "district visitor," is a lady, who has under her charge perhaps two or three of the poorer streets in the neighborhood, and "visits" the people, dispensing temporal relief in cases of need, and watching for opportunities to speak of religion. In this sense we find the word in Matt. 25. 36, "I was sick, and ye visited me," and in James 1. 27, "Pure religion.....is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," etc.

In the passage before us to-day, we have God represented to us as a *Visitor*. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people," ver. 68. "The dayspring from on high hath visited us," ver. 78. And we may surely say that God's visits partake of all the three special characters just referred to. He comes as a Visitor to inspect; he comes as a Visitor to sojourn; he comes as a Visitor to bring help and comfort.

Some of God's visits, indeed, have the first character, but not the other two. "Shall I not *visit* for these things?" is the warning by Jeremiah's mouth. "*Visiting* the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," is the expression of the Second Commandment. But more often the word has a good sense. "God will surely *visit* you," says dying Joseph to his nation in Egypt.. "What is man," exclaims the Psalmist, "that Thou *visitest* him?" And in another Psalm, "O *visit* me with thy salvation."

But before inquiring further what the Song of Zacharias tells us of the Divine Visitor, let us look at the circumstances of the song itself, for it is a song as well as a prophecy—an inspired song like Mary's, bursting forth, as in her case, as the Spirit gave the old priest utterance, but having this in addition to make it remarkable, that it was the unloosing of the tongue after many months' total dumbness.

It is a pretty domestic scene that is pictured to us in vers. 58–64. The aged mother and her infant; the dumb and deaf father, used to his affliction after suffering it for so long; the kinsfolk and neighbors with their congratulations; the ancient and sacred rite admitting the child to the privileges of the national covenant; the discussion about the name—the relatives thinking *they* must settle the matter as the father was cut off from communication; the unexpected interposition of Elisabeth, to which they will not listen without an effort to ascertain what Zacharias wishes; the fetching of the waxen tablet and the sharp-pointed *stylus*, (for though signs might express the question what name should be given, no signs could spell out the name in reply;) the astonishment of the friends at the father fixing on the same name of John, which to them seemed so arbitrarily chosen—(this astonishment proves Zacharias was deaf as well as dumb, for otherwise they would have supposed he had heard the conversation;) and, finally, the sudden burst of inspired praise from the lips so long closed. And while the political events of that period are known only to a comparatively small number of students of history, the scene in this humble Judean dwelling, narrated in such vivid detail, appears in print in millions of volumes, and in two hundred languages, and will be read on this Sunday by children of every race and clime!

Zacharias blesses the Lord God of Israel. What for? For the birth to him of a son in his old age? No, that is a mercy, but the thought of it is swallowed up in the thought of a far greater mercy. It is for *God's visit*—a visit with a blessed purpose, Redemption. "He hath visited and redeemed his people." Let us inquire—

1. *What Zacharias tells of the Redeemer?*

(*a*) It is worth noting that he does not suppose his new-born child to be the Redeemer. That child's birth had been announced by an angel; it was born out of the ordinary course of nature; it was to him and Elisabeth like Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, and, like Isaac, was named by God before his birth. Moreover, he was to be "great in the sight of the Lord." Yet Zacharias makes no mistake about it. John is but to be the forerunner. In the midst of his song the old man turns, as it were, to the babe and addresses it—"Thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."

(*b*) The words just quoted might lead us to suppose that Zacharias regarded this Divine Visit for the redemption of men as merely a manifestation of God's power similar to that when he "visited" his people in Egypt. "Thou shalt go before the face of *the Lord*," as though John were to be the executor of God's will in much the same way that Moses was. But another verse shows that he knew better. "Hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David"—this shows that he looked for a man—one of David's line, whose coming should be God's visit, whose work should be God's redemption; while John, who was of the tribe of Levi, should be the forerunner of that other Coming One.

(*c*) The song expresses a truth about this Coming One which Zacharias could not himself grasp as we grasp it. The prophetic impulse gave him words that went beyond his own knowledge. Compare 1 Pet. 1. 11, 12. We know, what he did not, how the birth of a scion of David's house could literally be a visit of God to the earth. Zacharias did not consciously announce the Incarnation, but the inspiring Spirit did announce it by his mouth. And we can thank God that it is no figure of speech to say that "the Lord hath visited his people."

2. *What Zacharias tells us of the Redemption.*

(*a*) It had been promised long before. "Since the world began," ver. 70—referring, no doubt, to the great original promise to Adam immediately after the fall. And, from that time downward, "by the mouth of all his holy prophets." It would be a good "home work for youthful Bereans" to trace this out.

(*b*) It was a deliverance from enemies, ver. 71. The same idea is expressed in the phrase "horn of salvation," ver. 69. The horn is a common figure for power, and the exalting of it a symbol of victory, in the Old Testament, derived from the thought of the horns of the bull or the stag as the seat of strength. In Psa. 132. 17, Messiah is called a horn: "There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed," where the "horn" and the "anointed" are plainly identical. But who are the enemies from whose hand there is to be deliverance? Most Jews at that time would have said, The Romans. The song of Zacharias looks deeper and higher: for—

(*c*) The result of the deliverance is to be the service of the Lord "in holiness and righteousness," ver. 75. Many of our young people have the feeling that they "would like to be good if they could, but they *can't*." Well, the "horn of salvation" is strong enough to thrust their spiritual enemies out of their hearts, and make them "holy and righteous." Let them try it!

(*d*) But there is something else first. Suppose we are made good—what of our past sins? For them there is "remission." The song does not say how; but we know now *whose* blood was shed to procure it.

(*e*) Every one who has tried to put the freeness and fullness of the Gospel before others individually knows how common is the answer, "I don't see it!" This difficulty, too, is met. Spiritually you may "sit in darkness," in the "shadow of death," but you need not; for God's visit is the visit of the "dayspring," the dawn rising up in the east, gleaming athwart the darkness, and guiding the wanderer's feet into the way of peace, vers. 78, 79. In this one beautiful figure there is enough for a lesson!

(*f*) And all "through the tender mercy of our God," literally the bowels of God's mercy, the striking illustration so often used in Scripture. Here is the final word to our Sunday scholars—The divine Visitor *yearns* over you: can you shut him out?

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Review the first lesson about Zacharias, and relate the connecting links between them....Show what was the spirit and theme of Zacharias in this prophecy.... What it teaches concerning Christ ...What it teaches concerning salvation....What it tells concerning the mission of John the Baptist....What it reveals as our privilege through Christ....Find here what reasons for rejoicing in Christ's coming may be named....Enforce the Golden Text, and show how Christ is the "dayspring," or dawn.

References. FOSTER'S PROSE: Vol. I. 700, 5206. Vol. II. 7149, 10280, 11034. POETICAL: 896, 2041.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

REVIEW.

LESSON THOUGHT. God Visits his Children.

1. Call back Lesson I. Tell the story of Zacharias, dumb because he could not quite believe God, and speech coming back to him through his act of faith. Now he is full of faith, and can speak God's words.

2. Talk about visitors. Who are we glad to have visit us? Those who love us, who can bring us good things, who can make us happy. Read verse 68. He does more than visit—he *redeems*. Explain. If we were in prison, how welcome the visitor would be who came to redeem us from prison. That is why God visits us—to redeem from the dark prison of sin.

3. Talk about enemies. Why do we fear them? What are some of our *soul* enemies? Get children to suggest. Talk a little about Pride, Envy, Selfishness, Indolence, etc., and show what cruel enemies they are, and how they will destroy our life unless we are saved from them. Illustrate. A child among cruel, wicked people, who beat and torment and threaten to kill. He has not one friend, and he cannot get away. But see! Father has found out where his child is, and is coming to deliver! Read verse 74. Zacharias, speaking God's words, says that God has sent Jesus to visit us, and to *deliver us* from our enemies.

4. Talk about light. The sun rising in the morning and scattering the night. Tell that light shows the good things and the bad things, too. The sun may be called the "dayspring." So when Jesus is called the "Dayspring from on high," he is compared to the sun. Read verses 78, 79. Does any one like to sit in the dark? Why cannot we walk in the night as well as in the day? Our feet stumble because we cannot see. So we need the light that Jesus gives to walk without falling and hurting ourselves. Explain that *to walk* means the every-day acts of our lives.

CLOSING EXERCISE. Change Lesson Thought on board to read, "God visits me, his child." John was sent to tell that Jesus was coming. We have the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and Christian teachers to tell us that *he has come*. We must believe it, trust him, and follow him, that is, *obey* him.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

Of whom did Zacharias prophesy? The coming light. Who was that light? Christ the Lord. What was the light to accomplish? "To guide our feet into the way of peace." What was beneath all the prophecy? Faith.

B. C. 6.] LESSON IV. THE BIRTH OF JESUS; or, Good-will toward Men. [Jan. 23.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The hour long foretold has dawned at last, and CHRIST, the Shiloh of Jacob's prophecy, the Anointed of David's psalm, has come. It is an hour of peace throughout the world, for the nations have been united under the broad wings of Rome, and, amid the decay of old idolatries, are looking with yearning hearts for some new revelation of God. While all earth remains in ignorance, the eager eyes of angels watch the carpenter and his wife in their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the ancestral home of David's line, where they are to be enrolled upon the census of the Roman Empire. The khan is crowded with wealthier guests, and the mother of earth's Redeemer can find no room, save in the place allotted to the beasts. In such lowly surroundings her babe is born and laid for his first rest in a manger. The first news of the greatest event in all history is borne by angelic messengers, not to kings nor philosophers nor rabbins, but to a company of shepherds watching their flocks at night on the hillside. The song echoes upon the startled air, proclaiming "peace on earth, good-will to men," and as it dies away, and the vision of angels recedes, the believing shepherds hasten to the manger at Bethlehem, to feast their eyes upon the sight of their King. The news which they bear is heard by others with wonder, if not with faith, while the maiden-mother, with thoughts too deep for words, presses her babe to her bosom, and ponders over the wondrous events that have attended his coming.

Luke 2. 8-20.

[*Memory Verses*, 10–14.]

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

Exod. 24. 16: The glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai. Acts 7. 55: [Stephen] looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Isa. 52. 7: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Rom. 5. 11: We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of Da'vid, a Sav'iour, which is Christ the Lord.

Matt. 1. 21: Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Rev. 19. 16: He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. Phil. 2. 11: Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 And this *shall be* **a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.**

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Dan. 7. 10: Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. Psa. 103. 20, 21: Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all *ye* his hosts: *ye* ministers of his that do his pleasure.

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.

Eph. 3. 21: Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Isa. 49. 13: Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

Explanatory and Practical.

Verse 8. In the same country. Vicinity, or neighborhood, is meant; for the reference is to the pasture-fields around Bethlehem. **Shepherds.** The high honor of receiving the first news of the Saviour's birth is bestowed not upon those whom the world regards as noble, but upon plain workingmen, plying their vocation. (1) *The distinctions of rank and riches are as nothing in the eyes of God.* **Abiding in the field.** In Oriental countries shepherds remain with their flocks all night, sometimes in temporary huts or booths. **Keeping watch.** "Watching by sections," to guard their flocks from robbers and wild beasts, and keep them from straying.

9. The angel of the Lord. The life of Christ on earth began with angelic announcements of his coming, was attended with angelic comforters in his temptation and his agony, and ended with angelic messengers of his rising and ascension. (2) *Even in his humiliation the Son of God is accompanied with manifestations of his divine origin.* **Came upon them.** "Burst upon them," a sudden appearance. **The glory of the Lord.** A supernatural divine illumination, such as accompanied most messages of God. (3) *How glorious must the King appear whose servants are so bright!* **Sore afraid.** "Feared a great fear." So trembled Manoah, and Zacharias, and Mary, at the angel's coming. (4) *Even the purest hearts become conscious of unfitness when God's messengers are before them.* (5) *If saints tremble at the coming of an angel, how will sinners quake when they meet the Lord!*

10. Fear not. The angel, like the Gospel, first awakens fear, and then removes it. **Good tidings.** News of pardon to sinners; salvation to men; the coming of Israel's King; the bruising of Satan's head; the universal establishment of Messiah's rule—surely these were good tidings. **To all people.** In the original, "*the* people," referring originally to Israel, yet through Israel to the rest of the world.

11. Unto you. (6) *He is a Saviour to us, as surely as to the shepherds.* **City of David.** A name given to Bethlehem as the birthplace of King David; and in the prophecy of Micah announced as the birthplace of the Messiah. **A Saviour.** The most precious title of Christ is that which announces his mission "to seek and *to save* that which was lost." **Christ the Lord.** Christ is the Greek word, the same as Messiah in Hebrew, meaning "Anointed." So he is here called "the Anointed Lord," at once proclaiming his royalty and his divinity.

12. A sign unto you. Not a sign to strengthen their faith, for none was needed, but a token to distinguish the babe. **Find the babe.** Rather, "find a babe." They were to behold in a helpless, new-born infant, the world's Saviour and God's Son. (7) *See in all this the humanity, the humility, and the sympathy of our Saviour with us in every stage of our being.* **Swaddling clothes.** Not garments, but bands wrapped closely around the body. **Lying in a manger.** The mangers from which cattle feed in the East are generally made of small stones and mortar in the shape of an open box; and it is not unusual for little children to sleep in them still. (8) *The hearts of men are like the inn of Bethlehem, in which the Saviour, crowded out of the highest place, is compelled to take the lowest.*

13, 14. A multitude of the heavenly host. That is a throng of angels and heavenly beings, of whom there may be many orders. See Col. 1. 16. "An angel choir in the gallery of the firmament."—*Whedon.* **Glory to God in the highest.** This may mean either (1) The highest measure of glory. (2.) From the highest order of creation, (angels.) (3.) To God, the highest over all. (4.) In the highest heaven, as contrasted with the peace on earth. **On earth peace.** These angel choristers saw the ultimate result of the Gospel, in bringing peace to men. (1.) Peace between God and man, through the atonement. (2.) Peace between man and man, through a common love to Christ. (3.) Peace among nations through the influence of the Gospel. Not without significance is the fact that Christ was born at the only time, for centuries, when there was peace throughout the world. **Good-will toward men.** Either meaning that the birth of Christ is a token of God's love toward men; or, as some translate, "good-will among men."

15. The angels were gone. The vision fades, leaving the shepherds and their flocks. (9) *Hours of rapt glory are only occasional, and they leave us with the rugged realities of life.* **Let us now go.** The latter clause of the verse shows that this is not the utterance of a doubt, desirous of testing the truth of the message, but of ardent faith, eager to see that in which it already believes. (10) *It is our privilege not only to hear about Jesus, but to go to him, and see him.* **Bethlehem.** A village of Judah, six miles south of Jerusalem; famous in Old Testament history as the home of Boaz and

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth'le-hem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Ma'ry and Jo'seph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Acts 4. 20: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Ma'ry kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Ruth, and the birthplace of David. It is now *Beitlahm*, a town of three thousand inhabitants, mostly Greek Christians. A cave, traditionally supposed to be the place of Christ's birth, is shown near the wall.

16. They came with haste. Showing their faith by the eagerness of their works, and willing to leave their flocks to look upon their Saviour. (11) *No earthly object is too dear to be forsaken for Christ.* **Found Mary.** See notes, Lesson II. **Joseph.** The husband of Mary, and the reputed father of Jesus. As his name is not mentioned after Christ was twelve years old, he is presumed to have died before the public ministry of our Lord began.

17, 18. Made known abroad. Probably they related the wonderful events only in their own circle of acquaintance, and to Joseph and Mary, as there is no indication that the news reached the court or the capital. (12) *Those who have seen Christ should be his message-bearers to others.* **The saying.** That is, the words of the angel, and the song of the celestial company. **Heard it wondered.** There was a vast difference between the faith of the shepherds and the wonder of the hearers; one led them to Christ, the other probably soon faded away into doubt or forgetfulness. (13) *Heart-trust is better than emotional excitement.*

19, 20. Kept all these things. Treasured in her heart all these significant events, the angelic predictions, the heavenly song, and the midnight visit. **Pondered.** "Weighed them," thought of their importance, and the destiny of her child. (14) *How much thoughtful mothers may influence the lives of their children.* **Returned.** They had accomplished their mission, and could serve God among their sheep better than in a more public life. Perhaps some of them lived long enough in after years to recall these events and become disciples of Christ.

HOME READINGS.

M. The birth of Jesus. Luke 2. 8–20.
Tu. The promise to Mary. Luke 1. 26–35
W. The prophecy to Jacob. Gen. 49. 8–28.
Th. The prophecy of Moses. Deut. 18. 15–22.
F. The prophecy of David. Psa. 2. 1–12.
S. The prophecy of Isaiah. Isa. 42. 1–11.
S. The prophecy of Daniel. Dan. 9. 20–27.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men. Luke 2. 14.

LESSON HYMN. 8, 8, 4.

Hymnal, No. 189.

Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing:
Yonder shines the infant light;
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

TIME.—B. C. 6, according to the incorrect common chronology. Augustus Cæsar, emperor of the Roman world. Herod the Great, king of Judea.

CONNECTING LINKS.—1. The vision of Joseph. Matt. 1. 18–25. 2. The birth of Jesus. Luke 2. 1–7.

PLACE.—Bethlehem, six miles from Jerusalem.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—Salvation through Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Night Watch, v. 8–12.
At what time did this event take place?
What was the condition of the world at that time?
What led Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem?
What were the circumstances of Christ's birth?
Who received the first news of the Saviour's birth?
Why were such people chosen for this honor?
How was the event made known to them?
What is the effect of angelic appearances upon men, and why?
Why were these "good tidings?"
What is the meaning of the word "Christ?"
Why was a "sign" needed?

2. The Night Song, v. 13, 14.
Who appeared with the angel?
How did this illustrate Dan. 7. 10?
What was the song of the heavenly host? GOLDEN TEXT.
How did Christ's birth glorify God?
What did it bring to men, and how?
How is this song illustrated by Rev. 5. 13, and Col. 1. 19, 20?
Has Christ's coming brought peace among the nations of men?
How does it bring good-will?

3. The Night Visit, v. 15–20.
What was the resolve of the shepherds?
Did it show any doubt of the angel's message?
What inspired their journey?
How were they an example to us?
What resulted from their journey?
What reasons can be given why Christ should come as a babe?
What was the after-conduct of the shepherds?
How were their tidings received?
Did those who heard believe their story?

Practical Teachings.

What is taught in this lesson—1. As to the persons whom God honors? 2. As to the subject which inspires angelic songs? 3. As to the benefits which flow from Christ's coming?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Night Watch, v. 8–12.
Who were watching, and where?
What shepherd had watched in that region long before? 1 Sam. 17. 15.
Who appeared to the shepherds?
What was the effect of his coming upon them?
How were their fears removed?
What were the good tidings?
Why were these good tidings?
Why is it good news "to all people?"
What is meant by "the city of David?"
By what sign could they find the Saviour?

2. The Night Song, v. 13, 14.
Who appeared with the angel? What were they doing?
How did they illustrate Psa. 103. 20, 21?
What was the song of these angels? GOLDEN TEXT.
How does Christ's coming bring glory to God?
What does it bring to men, and how?
What is said in Eph. 2. 14, 17?
How should we receive the news of Christ?

3. The Night Visit, v. 15–20.
What did the shepherds resolve to do?
How did this show their faith?
When did they go?
When is the best time to seek Jesus?
What did the shepherds find?
What did they tell to others?
How was their report received?
What is said of the mother of Jesus?
How did the shepherds show their joy and thankfulness?
How many good things can you find in the conduct of these shepherds?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we learn—1. That Christ's coming brings joy? 2. That those who hear of Christ should seek him? 3. That those who know Christ should tell others about him?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

1. The Night Watch, v. 8–12.
Who were watching? **Shepherds with their flock.**
Where were they watching? **In the fields near Bethlehem.**
When were they watching? **At night.**
Who came to them? **An angel of the Lord**
How did they feel when they saw the angel? **They were afaid.**
What were the first words of the angel? **"Fear not."**
What else did he say? **"I bring you good tidings of great joy."**
What were the tidings? **That Jesus was born that day.**
How did the angel say that they might know him? **As a babe lying in a manger.**

2. The Night Song, v. 13, 14.
Who suddenly appeared? **A multitude of angels.**
What did they say? [GOLDEN TEXT.]
For what were they praising God? **Because Christ had come.**
What does Christ bring to men? **Peace and good-will.**
How does he do this? **By making those who love him love all other men.**
For what, then, was the babe of Bethlehem born? **To be a blessing to every body.**

3. The Night Visit. v. 15–20.
What did the shepherds say after the visit of the angels? **"Let us go to Bethlehem."**
Why did they go there? **To see Jesus.**
When did they go? **At once.**
When should we go to seek Christ? **As soon as we hear about him.**
Whom did they find? **Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger.**
Who was this babe? **The Lord Jesus Christ.**
What good thing did the shepherds afterward do? **They told others about Jesus.**
How were the words of the shepherds received? **With wonder.**
In what spirit did the shepherds go back to their flock? **With praises to God.**
For what did they praise God? **For sending a Saviour to the world.**

Words with Little People.

1. Try to have the peace that Christ brings in your heart. 2. Seek Jesus as soon as you hear about him. 3. Tell others about Christ when you have found him. 4. Praise God for sending his Son to save you.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Where was Jesus Christ born? **At Bethlehem of Judea.**
2. Who received the first news of his birth? **Shepherds near Bethlehem.**
3. By whom was the news brought? **By an angel.**
4. Where did the shepherds find the infant Christ? **In a manger.**
5. How was the report of the shepherds received by those who heard it? **With wonder.**
6. What duty do we learn from the fourth lesson? **To seek Christ promptly.**

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Tidings of the Redeemer.

I. HEAVENLY TIDINGS.
The angel ...came upon them. v. 9.
"His angels spirits....ministers a flame." Heb. 1. 7.

II. JOYFUL TIDINGS.
Good tidings of great joy. v. 10.
"Joy in God through....Jesus Christ." Rom. 5. 11.

III. UNIVERSAL TIDINGS.
Shall be to all people. v. 10.
"Go ye....teach all nations." Matt. 28. 19.

IV. WELCOME TIDINGS.
Unto you is born....a Saviour. v. 11.
"A child is born ...name....Wonderful." Isa. 9. 6.

V. WONDERFUL TIDINGS.
The babe....lying in a manger. v. 12.
"Took upon him the form of a servant." Phil. 2. 7.

VI. GLORIOUS TIDINGS.
Glory to God in the highest. v. 14.
"Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus." Eph. 3. 21.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Lessons from the Shepherds.

1. That God loves and honors those who are faithful in secular vocations, as well as in sacred. v. 8.

2. That even the best of men may fear when God's glory is revealed to them. v. 9.

3. That Christ is the Saviour for the lowly as well as the lofty, and "all people" have an interest in him. v. 10, 11.

4. That the humiliation of Christ's coming should not deter men from believing in him. v. 12.

5. That those who hear of Christ should also seek a personal knowledge of him. v. 15.

6. That people should seek Christ at once, and without delay. v. 16.

7. That those who have seen Christ should be messengers of him to others. v. 17.

English Teacher's Notes.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

WE in England have lately been startled by the secession from the Anglican Church of an eminent and popular preacher in London; not on account of ecclesiastical differences such as lead men to become Methodists or Presbyterians, but avowedly because he has ceased to believe in miracles, and particularly in one great miracle, the INCARNATION, which the Church he is leaving plainly and emphatically teaches. To us this is a lesson to be all the more distinct in our assertion of this great fundamental truth—or rather *fact*, for such it claims to be—not a mere dogma, however true, but a real historical event. That is to say, we hold not only that a child was actually born at Bethlehem who became the founder of the Christian religion, but that the child, though the offspring of an earthly mother, had no earthly father, and was in very deed the Son of God in human flesh. I have an impression that there is in America also a good deal of loose teaching on this point, or at least that the truth is often conveniently avoided; and if so, I earnestly press upon my friends who read these Notes the importance of making this lesson an occasion for very plain speaking on the Incarnation. For remember, upon this central fact of history rests the whole structure of our Christian faith. Remove the foundation and the building falls to the ground. No doubt you may build up another system in its place, and call it Christianity; but it will not be the Christianity of Paul and John, of Augustine and Chrysostom, of Luther and Wesley.

The tendency to let the essential Godhead of Jesus Christ fall into the background of our teaching is much encouraged by a circumstance for which, in itself, we ought to be very thankful. I mean the flood of light thrown by recent literature upon his earthly life and its surroundings. It is easy now to draw attractive pictures of the Babe of Bethlehem, of the Boy of Nazareth, of the Man of sorrows. His perfect character, and the reality of his human

sympathy, are described and illustrated for us in books of great eloquence and power. For the lesson now before us, almost every teacher is prepared with exact accounts of Bethlehem and its fields and its shepherds, and of every variety of inn or *khan*, and of their stables and mangers. I say again, Let us thank God for this. But it should all be used, and it can all be used, to lead up to the great central truth of the Incarnation, and not to hide it from our view.

Let me take two instances.

(1.) Few things are more apt to draw us aside from the spiritual teaching of Scripture than chronological questions, just because they are so interesting. Yet I would dwell a little on the synchronisms in the first two verses of this chapter. Suppose a few questions and answers as follows:

Do you remember the last census, when your father had to put all your names and ages on a piece of paper, and a man called and took it away? (My readers will describe the American method, of course.) Here is an account of a census 1884 years ago. (The word "taxed" means "registered;" it occurs also in Heb. 12. 23, "written in heaven.") Who orders a census to be made? The Government. Who was ruler of Judea at this time? Herod; see Luke 1. 5. But who ordered this census? What right had Cæsar Augustus to order it? Who was he? (Explain: Roman Empire and tributary kings. So now: Egypt pays tribute to Turkey. Native States in India to Great Britain.) But how could he order it in "all the world?" (Explain: means the Empire. Greek word always used in that sense in New Testament—*oikoumené*, not *kosmos*, as in "God so loved the world.") What had Cyrenius got to do with it? Governor of all Syria at that time, under Augustus: Judea a part of Syria. Which greatest, Cyrenius or Herod? Cyrenius, not in himself, but because represented Emperor, (as British Viceroy of India greater than the Maharajah of Cashmere.)

Now what is the good of all this? Will it not take up time that should be given to higher things. It may, very easily; but if kept in its proper place, it will do a most useful thing—it will show the position of the birth of Christ in general history, and help the realization of that birth as a historical fact. Of course, the fact that Jesus was then born does not of itself prove that he was the Son of God; but it helps us to trust the accuracy of Scripture; we feel we are in the region of true history and not of romance; and if Luke is correct when he refers to the Roman Empire, may we not believe him in the other things too?

But further: with classes capable of appreciating it, I would dwell on the old difficulty of the date of Cyrenius' governorship, and its remarkable solution within the last few years. Teachers who cannot only state the fact that Cyrenius was governor *twice*, but explain the curious chain of indirect evidence by which Zumpt of Berlin has proved it, will give intelligent scholars an illustration of the exact accuracy of Scripture which they will not forget. No "discrepancy" was more triumphantly appealed to formerly by objectors; none has been more completely transformed into Christian evidence. It is worth while for our young people to know how.

(2.) A description of Bethlehem, or of an Eastern *khan*, may be made a real help to the higher teaching of this lesson. Let me, instead of attempting one myself, copy here a few lines from a book called "Domestic Life in Palestine," by Miss Rogers, sister of a former British Consul at Damascus. The house she describes was not at Bethlehem; but her account is none the less available by way of illustration:

"I found the house consisted of only one very lofty room, about eighteen feet square.....Just within the door, a donkey and a yoke of oxen stood, and I soon perceived that rather more than one third of the room was set apart for cattle, where the floor, which was on a level with the street, was of earth, and partially strewn with fodder. We were led up two stone steps on to a dais, two feet high, where fragments of old mats and carpets were spread.....Meantime, our two horses were unsaddled, and lodged in the lower part of the room.....Three deep troughs or mangers, about three feet by one, were hollowed out of the broad stone coping at the edge of the dais. Mohammed, our groom, filled these troughs with barley, and our tired animals enjoyed their evening meal.....I imagined Joseph anxiously seeking rest and shelter for Mary after her long journey.....The raised floor was crowded with strangers, who had, like them, come to be taxed. But Joseph and Mary may have taken refuge from the cold in the lower part of the room.....I looked at one of the mangers, and felt how natural it was to use it as a cradle for a newly-born infant. Its size, its shape, its soft bed of fodder, its nearness to the warm fire always burning on the dais in midwinter, would immediately suggest the idea to an Eastern mother."

This is a vivid picture. Whether the "inn" at Bethlehem was like that, we cannot say. But this we can say, that the place where Jesus was born, whether a cave, as local tradition says, or any thing else, was certainly not better than what Miss Rogers describes. But how will all this help our teaching on the Incarnation? Just by contrast. *That was what the Son of God came down to.*

But now, how should the great fact of the Incarnation itself be introduced? Put it thus: You all have had a beginning, and that was when you were born. But the birth at Bethlehem was not Christ's beginning. See John 17. 5, where he speaks to the Father about "the glory which I had with thee before the world was." What was he *then?* Not a man; not an angel; but—see John 1. 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But how do we know this "Word" was Christ? Look at the fourteenth verse, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," there is the birth at Bethlehem. So Mary's babe, the child Jesus, was God! But when we pray to God as "Our Father," do we mean Jesus? No: there are God the Father and God the

Son; and also God the Holy Ghost. What? three Gods? No; see Deut. 6. 4; 1 Cor. 8. 4. Three persons in one God—all equal, for see how they are mentioned together. Matt. 28. 19; 2 Cor. 13. 14.

Then, in what way did God the Son become Man? We cannot understand it all, but we know this—

(*a*) He laid aside his glory. Phil. 2. 6, 7. See a picture of what that glory was. Isa. 6. 1–6. Compare John 12. 41. What made him give it up to come down here? See 2 Cor. 8. 9.

(*b*) He took a human body. He was really born, and had a real mother. Gal. 4. 4. His body grew. Luke 2. 52. He was hungry, Matt. 4. 2; thirsty, John 4. 7; tired, John 4. 6. He really died. Mark 15. 44, 45.

(*c*) He took a human soul. Do not think of him as God in a human body. He thought and felt as a man; had a man's will, Luke 22. 42; was glad, Luke 10. 21; sorry, Mark 3. 5; Luke 19. 41; John 11. 35; surprised, Matt. 8. 10; Mark 6. 6. One thing he *had not*—sin. See 2 Cor. 5. 21; Heb. 4. 15; 1 John 3. 5.

(*d*) Yet he was God all the while. See what was predicted, Isa. 7. 14; 9. 6—the "child" should be "the Mighty God;" and what does "Emmanuel" mean? See Matt. 1. 23. See what he said about himself—spoke of God sending his only-begotten Son into the world, (John 3. 16, 17)—made himself "equal with God," (John 5. 18)—said all "should honor the Son even as they honor the Father, (John 5. 23)—said, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above," (John 8. 23)—"Before Abraham was, I AM," (John 8. 58)—"I and my Father are one," (John 10. 30)—and many other like sayings.

Let us all adore him as Thomas did, (John 20. 28,) and say, "My Lord and my God!"

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw or show on the map the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.. .Explain the purpose of their coming, the inn, the manger....A picture, 1.) Of the night watch; 2.) Of the night song, (coming of the angel, his message, the heavenly host;) 3. Of the night visit....The persons of the lesson, their traits, and lessons from each, 1.) The angels' joy; 2.) The shepherds' faith; 3.) The mother's thoughtfulness; 4.) The hearer's wonder....What is here taught concerning Christ: 1.) His humanity; 2.) His humility.

References. FOSTER'S PROSE: Vol. I. 3237, 696, 712. Vol. II. 7119, 9828, 10009. POETICAL: 257, 2123. FREEMAN: Swaddling clothes, 751; Manger, 751.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

REVIEW. Call back the prophecy of Zacharias. Who was coming to visit his people? What did he do? See that the words "deliver" and "redeem" are understood. What did he give? A few crayon strokes to indicate the sun's rays will recall the teachings on light.

LESSON THOUGHT: Jesus is God's Good-will.

INTRODUCTORY. Ask how many remember Mary's song. Talk about her gladness and its cause, and sketch vividly the journey to Bethlehem, the stay at the humble house which was the only stopping-place they could find, and the coming of the Lord of heaven to this lowly spot.

1. Talk about shepherds. Some of them were men who knew and loved God, as David, who was made a king. These were men loved by God, or he would not have sent word to them first of the coming of Jesus. Make the story clear and simple—the angel, the bright shining, the fear of the shepherds, and the glad announcement by the angels. Tell what he meant by the "City of David," and let class rise and recite, (unless it can be chanted,) the angelic song:

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
Good-will toward men."

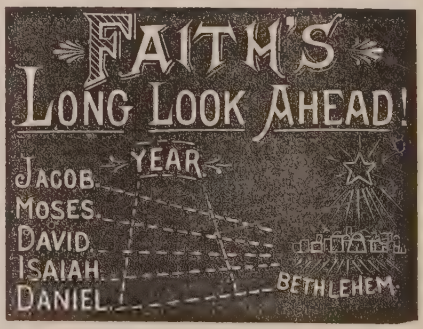
2. What the shepherds did. They had heard of a wonderful Babe, and they set out at once to see him. What good can a helpless little baby do in this great world? Wouldn't a big, strong, wise man be more likely to have some good gift for the world? Let us read the eleventh verse, and see what name the angel gave to this baby. "Saviour," "Christ," "The Lord." They thought he must be worth finding, and so they went *quickly* to find him. As soon as we hear of Jesus we ought to try to find him. God sends word to us today of his coming.

3. Tell where they found him. Describe the great event it is when an earthly prince is born—the great preparations, the costly gifts, etc. Jesus lay in a manger! He did not come to the rich. He came to help and bless and save *all*—the very poorest and humblest. The shepherds went away *to tell the story*. They had found something precious—a gift from God—and they could not keep the good news to themselves. They *praised God*. They were glad, and they thanked God for sending this dear baby to bring light and salvation to the world.

CLOSING EXERCISE. Tell what good-will is. When it is in the heart there is almost always some way to show it. God felt good-will toward us, and so he sent Jesus to show it to us. "God so loved the world," etc. People often send gifts to show their good-will, or kind feeling, and Jesus is God's gift.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



Place the diagram as it is on the board. By questions bring out the time of the prophecies that looked toward Bethlehem. As the answers are given, write them opposite the names, have the prophecies read, and sing appropriate songs of praise.

B. C. 6.] LESSON V. SIMEON AND THE CHILD JESUS; or, Salvation Seen. [Jan. 30.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The fortieth day after the birth of Christ has come, and the carpenter and his wife, with the babe of destiny, now leave their lowly dwelling-place to formally present the child before the Lord in Jerusalem. They pass out the gate of Bethlehem, and wind their way, first among terraced hillsides, and then through dark ravines overhung by frowning mountains. After a journey of six miles they come up the valley of the Kedron, and behold the white walls and gilded roof of the temple, rising on the hill of Moriah. They enter the gate of the holy city, thread its narrow streets, and at last find themselves within the long porticoes of the Court of the Women. Their humble offering of a pair of doves is received by the priests in waiting, and carried within the inner court to be laid upon the great altar as a token that their child is accepted by the God of Israel. Suddenly an old man approaches them. It is Simeon, the just and the devout, who has been long awaiting the fulfillment of the Lord's promise that his eyes shall look upon the Messiah of Israel's hope. As his glance rests upon the babe in its young mother's arms, a new light flashes upon his face, for by a divine revelation in that babe he recognizes the Lord's Christ. He takes it in his arms, uplifts his eyes in gratitude to God for his high privilege, which kings and prophets have vainly longed to enjoy, and then in a strain of high inspiration predicts the salvation of the world to be wrought by the child he holds; and not only this, but the opposition and sorrow and suffering, culminating in the cross on Calvary, which shall pierce the mother's heart, and reveal the cruelty of the unbelieving people.

Luke 2. 25-35.

[*Memory verses* 28–32.]

25 **And, behold, there was a man in Je-ru'sa-lem, whose name *was* Sim'e-on; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Is'ra-el: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.**

Isa. 25. 9: It shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Mark 15. 43: Joseph of Arimathea....also waited for the kingdom of God.

26 **And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.**

27 **And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Je'sus, to do for him after the custom of the law,**

Num. 8. 17: All the first-born of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast; on the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself. Num. 18. 15: Nevertheless the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.

28 **Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,**

29 **Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:**

Gen. 46. 30: Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face. Phil. 1. 23: I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ: which is far better.

30 **For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,**

31 **Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;**

Gen. 49. 18: I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord. Matt. 13. 17: Many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*. Isa. 52. 10: The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

32 **A light to lighten the Gen'tiles, and the glory of thy people Is'ra-el.**

Isa. 49. 6: It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salva-

Explanatory and Practical.

Verse 25. Whose name was Simeon. Some have supposed that this was Simeon the father of the celebrated Gamaliel, and president of the council; who was living at that time, though not an old man, as seems to be intimated in vers. 26, 29: but there is no certain evidence on the subject. **Just.** Righteous in character, and upright in relation to his fellow men. **Devout.** Having reverence for God, and fulfilling the observances of worship. (1) "*Devotion toward God is the mother of justice toward man.*" **Waiting for the consolation.** The Messiah was called "the consolation of Israel," since his coming was expected to comfort the people under their national trials by giving them freedom and a just rule. **The Holy Ghost was upon him.** So close was his communion with God, that a divine influence rested upon him, enlightening his understanding, and giving him some knowledge of the future.

26. Revealed unto him. "By an inward revelation which it would be as impossible to describe as presumptuous to doubt."—*Van Oosterzee.* (2) *Those who live near the Lord discern the mind of the Lord.* **Not see death.** Should not die until the coming of the promised Christ. A very precious privilege, making it evident that his appearance was to be during that generation. (3) "*God's elect never die, until by the eye of faith they have seen Christ.*"—*Quesnel.* **The Lord's Christ.** Literally, "the Lord's Anointed:" in Hebrew, the Messiah.

27. He came by the Spirit. Though doubtless accustomed to go to the temple for worship, on this occasion he went under a special divine leading, an impulse from on high. (4) *When God leads, his people may look for a blessing.* **Into the temple.** Into the second court, known as the "court of the women," where worship was generally offered by the people. See Notes Lesson I, ver. 9. **The parents.** Mary and Joseph. Joseph, though not personally related, was regarded as the father of Jesus in a legal sense. **The child Jesus.** An infant, forty days old. **After the custom of the law.** The law required that about forty days after the birth of a child, an offering should be presented in its behalf by the parents. The rich gave a lamb and a turtle dove, the poor two doves; one for a burnt-offering, the other for a sin-offering. From the fact that the parents of Jesus gave only the doves, their poverty has been deduced. Luke 2. 23, 24. (5) *He who took upon him our nature, descended to its lowest depths, and though rich, for our sakes became poor.*

28, 29. Took he him up in his arms. Recognizing by a divine enlightenment the Messiah in the tiny babe, he rejoiced that God's promise had been more than fulfilled, for he was permitted not only to see, but to embrace his Redeemer. **And said.** There is a broadening light with each one of the three successive songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon; the mother sings of her son, the priest of the triumph of his nation, and the aged saint of the salvation of the Gentile world. **Now lettest thou.** "Thou mayest release thy servant," as if death to the servant of God were only a setting free of an imprisoned soul. (6) *To him who has embraced Christ, death has lost its sting.*

30, 31. Mine eyes have seen. His was a personal, individual look at his Redeemer. (7) *So must each soul for itself look unto Jesus.* **Thy salvation.** Embodied in the person of the Saviour. He looks upon Jesus less in his kingly, and more in his priestly capacity, than either of those whose prophetic songs have been given, thus penetrating deeper into the divine plan of redemption. **Which thou hast prepared.** Not an event happening by accident, but that for which all time has been paving the way. **Face of all people.** Literally, "all peoples;" including both Jews and Gentiles as named in the next verse.

32. To lighten the Gentiles. "For a revelation to the Gentiles." Here is an insight into the Gospel plan far clearer than that of even the most intelligent of the Jews, or even of the disciples, until long after the ascension. The common conception of the Messiah was of a prince reigning over Israel and conquering the Gentile nations. Now for the first time is presented the thought of a Saviour for all mankind. Most appropriately is this first gleam of Gentile privilege recorded by St. Luke, the only Gentile evangelist. **The glory of thy people.** In the salvation of the Gentile world we are not to forget the honor of Israel, as the stalk on which grew this glorious blossom, which has shed its fragrance over all the lands.

33, 34. Marveled. They did not understand the lofty utterances of Simeon, and were confused by his mention of the Gentiles, to them mys-

tion unto the end of the earth. Matt. 4. 16: The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

33 **And Jo'seph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him.**

34 **And Sim'e-on blessed them, and said unto Ma'ry his mother, Behold, this** *child* **is set for the fall and rising again of many in Is'ra-el; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;**

35 **(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.**

terious. **Blessed them.** Pronounced upon them the divine benediction, in view of their high privilege. **For the fall and rising.** "For the downfall and uprising." The word "again" is not needed in the translation, and leads to an erroneous impression. Those who fall here are not the same with those who rise. The one are those whose expectations of temporal kingdom in the coming of Christ are doomed to disappointment; the other are those who, accepting Christ in humble faith, rise to salvation. The Jews as a people fell: the Gentile Christians rose. (8) *God's plans are always a surprise to men.* **A sign which shall be spoken against.** The token of God's love to men, yet rejected and reviled.

35. Yea, a sword shall pierce. A reference to the troubles which the mother of Jesus was destined to experience in the rejection of her Son by the people, her own misunderstanding of his mission, and her culminating grief at his crucifixion. (9) *The path to blessedness must be trodden through sorrow.* **Thoughts of many hearts.** By their treatment of Christ men should reveal their true character, thoughts, and feelings. (10) *Nothing will disclose the heart of a man now so clearly as the relation which he holds toward his Saviour.*

HOME READINGS.

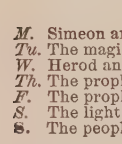
M. Simeon and the child Jesus. Luke 2. 25–35.
Tu. The magi and the child. Matt. 2. 1–12.
W. Herod and the child. Matt. 2. 13–25.
Th. The prophetic star. Num. 24. 1–19.
F. The prophetic name. Isa. 9. 1–7.
S. The light to the Gentiles. Isa. 49. 6–18.
S. The people of God. Rom. 9, 20–33.

GOLDEN TEXT.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Luke 2. 30.

LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hymnal, No. 914.



Light of the lonely pilgrim's heart,
Star of the coming day,
Arise, and with thy morning beams
Chase all our griefs away!

Come, blessed Lord, let every shore
And answering island sing
The praises of thy royal name,
And own thee as their King.

Bid the whole earth, responsive now
To the bright world above,
Break forth in sweetest strains of joy,
In memory of thy love.

TIME.—B. C. 6, about forty days after the birth of Jesus.

CONNECTING LINKS.—1. The circumcision and naming of Jesus. Luke 2. 21. 2. The presentation of the infant Saviour. Luke 2. 22–24.

PLACE.—The women's court of the temple in Jerusalem.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The personality of the Holy Ghost.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. A Saint's Desire, v. 25, 26.
Who is here named, and what is known concerning him?
What elements of his character are here exhibited?
How did he show strong faith in God's promises?
What desire did he cherish?
Why was this expectation precious to a pious Jew?
In what sense was the Holy Ghost upon him?
What special promise had been given to him?
What is the promise in Isa. 25. 9?
What is the meaning of "the Lord's Christ?"

2. A Saint's Delight, v. 27–35.
To what place did Simeon come, and how was he led?
Whom did he meet?
What was "the custom of the law" in this case?
What was its origin and import? Lev. 12. 2–8.
How did Simeon recognize Jesus as the Christ?
With what feeling did he see Jesus?
What spirit of a true disciple did he show?
How did his desire compare with Paul's? Phil. 1. 23.
What was Simeon's view of Christ's mission?
How do we here see the foreshadowings of salvation for the Gentiles?
How was Christ a glory to Israel?
How did Joseph and Mary regard the words of Simeon?
How was Christ to cause the "fall" and "rising" of many? Comp. 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.
When was the prediction concerning the mother of Jesus fulfilled?
How did Christ reveal the thoughts of many hearts?

Practical Teachings.

Where does this lesson teach—1. How a saint should regard life? 2. How a saint should regard death? 3. How a saint should regard Christ's coming?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. A Saint's Desire, v. 25, 26.
Who is here named?
What was his character?
What is a "just" man?
What is it to be "devout?"
What power did he possess?
What was his desire?
Who was "the consolation of Israel," and wherein?
What had been promised to Simeon?
Wherein is our privilege higher than his?

2. A Saint's Delight, v. 27–35.
To what place did Simeon come?
What led him there?
Whom did he meet there?
For what purpose was Jesus there? v. 22–24.
How did Simeon know that he was the Saviour?
What did Simeon do?
What wish did he express, and why?
Whose wish might be compared with this? Phil. 1. 23.
What will make us always ready to die?
How may we see Christ?
What is Christ called in v. 32?
Who are the Gentiles, and how does Christ enlighten them?
How did Joseph and Mary receive Simeon's words?
What did Simeon say to Mary?
What is meant by "the fall and rising again?"
How is this illustrated by 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8?
By whom was Jesus spoken against? John 9. 16.
When did a sword pierce through Mary's soul? John 19. 25.

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we find—1. A character which God honors? 2. A desire which God rewards? 3. A light which may shine upon all men?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

1. A Saint's desire, v. 25, 26.
What is a saint? **A holy man.**
What saint is here spoken of? **Simeon.**
Where did he live? **In Jerusalem.**
What is said about him? **"He was just and devout."**
What is it to be "just?" **To be honest with all men.**
What is it to be "devout?" **To be earnest and often in prayer.**
For what was Simeon waiting? **For the coming of Christ.**
What had God promised him? **That he should live to see Christ.**

2. A Saint's Delight, v. 27–35.
To what place did Simeon come? **To the Temple in Jerusalem.**
Whom did he meet there? **Joseph and Mary, with the child Jesus.**
How old was Jesus then? **He was a little more than a month old.**
For what had they brought him to the Temple? **To make an offering for him.**
What did Simeon do when he saw Jesus? **He took him up in his arms.**
What did he say? **That he was ready now to die.**

Why did he say that he was ready to die? [See GOLDEN TEXT.]
What did he call Jesus? **A Light, to lighten the world.**
What did he do to Joseph and Mary? **He blessed them.**
What did Simeon tell them? **That Jesus should find enemies.**
Whom did he mean? **The Jews who would oppose him.**
What did he say to Mary? **"A sword shall pierce through thy soul."**
When was this word fulfilled? **Years after, when she saw her Son on the cross.**

Words with Little People.

1. Patiently wait for God to fulfill his promise.
2. Take Christ, not to your arms, but to your heart.
3. Be among the friends, and not the enemies, of Jesus.
4. Live so that at any time you will be ready to die.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Simeon? **A just and devout man.**
2. What had been promised to him? **That he should live to see Christ.**
3. Where did he see the infant Saviour? **In the temple.**
4. What did he call Jesus? **A light to lighten the Gentiles.**
5. What are we taught in the fifth lesson? **To receive Christ willingly.**

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Simeon's View of Christ.

I. CHRIST THE COMFORTER.
Waiting for the consolation of Israel. v. 25.
"The Lord shall comfort Zion." Isa. 51. 3.

II. CHRIST THE SAVIOUR.
Mine eyes have seen thy salvation. v. 30.
"I have waited for thy salvation." Gen. 49. 18.

III. CHRIST THE ENLIGHTENER.
A light to lighten the Gentiles. v. 32.
"For a light to the Gentiles." Isa. 42. 6.

IV. CHRIST THE REJECTED.
A sign which shall be spoken against. v. 34.
"A stone of stumbling....offense." 1 Pet. 2. 8.

V. CHRIST THE DISCERNER.
Thoughts of....hearts be revealed. v. 35.
"A discerner of....thoughts and intents." Heb.4.12.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

The Salvation Seen.

1. It was seen by a holy man, one whose life was devoted to God's service. v. 25.
2. It was seen by one who looked forward to seeing it as the crowning event of his life. v. 26.
3. It was seen as a present salvation, not, as seen by the prophets of old, a future salvation. v. 30.
4. It was seen as an universal salvation, for all people. v. 31, 32.
5. It was seen as a strange and mysterious salvation, causing some to fall and others to rise. v. 34.
6. It was seen as a salvation bringing sorrow as well as rejoicing. v. 35.

English Teacher's Notes.

BY EUGENE STOCK, ESQ.

IN old romances it is not uncommon for the story to turn upon the hero's fate being dependent on the occurrence of some strange event. Some venerable bard or astrologer has foretold that his life is safe until a certain very unlikely thing happens. And at the crisis of the story that unlikely thing does happen, and the hero meets his irrevocable doom. All my readers will remember Macbeth, for instance, who, the witches said, might rest secure "till Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane," and whose defeat and death were heralded by what seemed to be the wood of Birnam Hill marching toward him.

Now, of course, in all these cases we find every hope and effort concentrated upon avoiding and averting the catastrophe as long as possible. And is not this natural? Let me suppose, for illustration's sake, that to one of us now a message came from heaven, telling us that we should not die till—say, till a certain person came from the other side of the globe. How fervently we should hope that he would not come just yet! Any thing to prolong life; any thing to defer death! It is true that a fretful person will sometimes utter the thoughtless words, "I wish I were dead!" But if at that moment a naked sword were pointed at his breast, he would run away fast enough.

How was it with old Simeon? He really did have a supernatural intimation regarding his destiny. And it was no mere augury of an astrologer. It was a divine word. "It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." What effect had this revelation upon him? As year after year passed away, and his strength grew feebler, and his step more uncertain, was he getting more and more nervous and anxious lest one day he should hear the rallying cry, Messiah has come? And at last when he saw the humble carpenter bringing his young wife and her new-born child, with the lowly offering of their poverty, (ver. 24; see Lev. 12. 8,) and when the Divine Revealer pointed out to him that helpless infant as "the Lord's Christ," did his heart fail him, and his cheek blanch, and his tongue refuse to speak, from terror at the long-dreaded hour having arrived?

Surely it is an impressive scene from this point of view. "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God." And why did he bless God? Because Messiah had appeared at last? Certainly, but with this joy for his nation's sake, he might have had nothing more than a kind of resigned submission on his own account. Yes, he might say, it is a grand thing that the Christ has come; and as for me, well, I must try and not murmur; God has been good to me in letting me live so long. But it was not so at all. He rejoiced to see the Child, not only for what he was to do and to be for Jew and Gentile, but also because his appearing was the signal for his own release. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

The words themselves are remarkable. The word rendered "Lord" is not the usual one, *Kyrie.* It rather means "master." Nor is it one of the words usually found where Christ is called "Master," meaning teacher, or superintendent. It is *Despota*, and expresses the relationship of master and slave. "Servant," too, is literally "slave." Simeon speaks as one in bond-service, who after long waiting is receiving his manumission, and is in sight of freedom. "Master," he says, joyfully, "now at length art thou releasing thy slave."

Now we do not wish to encourage false sentiment in this matter. We do not desire the careless phrase, "I wish I were dead," to become a true utterance in any one's mouth. There is a popular hymn of Faber's which was much sung, (for the sake of its

swinging tune,) a few years ago, and you might hear a large congregation lustily shouting out, "O Paradise! O Paradise! Wherefore doth death delay?" Nothing could be more painfully unreal. At the same time, I think the foregoing line of illustration and contrast may usefully be employed in this lesson to show how happily a godly man can meet death. He will take care of the life and health God has given him, and thank God for them; and yet, whenever the summons does come, he will know that his work on earth is finished, and he will go joyfully to his rest.

But now let us turn to the event itself, which was to old Simeon the signal of his release. It was the appearance of "the Lord's Christ," or Messiah. But observe, Simeon's thoughts about that Coming One so long promised were not like the thoughts of many others at that day. The notion of most people was of a warrior-king who should drive out the Romans and "restore again the kingdom to Israel." Others were looking for a great Rabbi; the Samaritan woman, for instance, who said, "I know that Messias cometh; when he is come, he shall tell us all things." What Simeon desired and expected we can gather from two interesting expressions. He is represented as waiting for the *consolation* of Israel," and his own word is, "Mine eyes have seen thy *salvation*." It will be a useful thing to base the chief teaching of this lesson on these two terms.

1. *Consolation.* In what sense was Messiah to be the Consolation of Israel? And is there any sense in which he can be our Consolation?

What does the word mean? To answer this question, let me suggest an illustration. A timid and retiring boy goes to a new school. His more boisterous comrades quickly make him the butt of their practical jokes, and torment him with the peculiar mercilessness we only see in school-boys, (at least we see it in English school-boys.) But one kind-hearted elder boy takes his part. He makes friends with him, cheers him up, protects him, teaches him to stand up for himself, helps him in a thousand little ways. Now this illustrates exactly what is meant by the "consolation" or "comfort" of the New Testament. It is not merely what the word "comfort" means to us. The kind protector at school is indeed a great comfort to our poor young friend, but why? Not because of his soothing words and friendly manner only, but because also of his active help. "I like Brown," writes the younster to his mother or sister; "he *takes my part*." Taking our part—this familiar phrase just expresses the scope of that Greek word which in the Gospel of John is translated *Comforter*, and in the Epistle of John *Advocate;* and the noun "consolation" is closely connected with it. Our English word "comfort" originally had more of this meaning. Thus, in Wycliffe's version of Isa. 41. 7 we read, "And he *coumfortide* hym with nailes that it should not be moved," where our version has "fastened." And so in Phil. 4. 13, "Christ that strengtheneth me" is, in Wycliffe, "that *coumfortith* me."

The "Consolation of Israel." One to take the part of God's people, to be on their side, to care for them, pity them, comfort them, strengthen them, help them, plead their cause, be identified with them as their Advocate—that is what Simeon was waiting for; that is what Christ came to be; that is what he will be to us if we will only accept his advocacy and companionship.

2. *Salvation.* This, too, here, does not stand for what Christ brings, but for Christ himself. It is a stronger word in the Greek than the usual one, and denotes the agency by which salvation is procured. "Mine eyes," said Simeon, "have seen thy salvation," that is, the very Saviour himself, in the person of the little infant in Mary's arms.

What is the difference between Salvation and Consolation? To revert to my illustration, the school-boy knows well the difference in his own case. His friend may take his part bravely, but he may not be able to save him entirely from his tormentors. An Advocate seeks to save, but even if he fails, his help is still valued. Better suffer with a sympathizer than without one. But a Saviour *saves*. Christ is a *successful* Advocate; and therefore he is a Saviour too.

Let the question be pressed home, Is he your Saviour? What from? From the condemnation of sin now, at once—by his atoning death. From the power of sin as we go on in life—by his indwelling Spirit. From the presence of sin—when he takes us one day to himself. Simeon rejoiced to see him in his humiliation: shall we rejoice to see him in his glory?

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Sketch the character of Simeon: 1.) A righteous man; 2.) A devout worshiper; 3.) Endowed with the Spirit; 4.) Waiting for the Saviour....A word-picture of the meeting in the temple....The offering, why, and what? ....Explain "*Consolation of Israel;*" "*Holy Ghost upon him;*" "*Custom of the law;*" "*Fall and rising again,*" etc., etc....Present the view of Christ as given in this lesson....What are our privileges as compared with Simeon?

References. FOSTER'S PROSE. Vol I. 2098, 662, 720, 5157. Vol. II. 7181, 7197. POETICAL: 1207, 2037. FREEMAN: The "Consolation," 752.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

REVIEW on names of Jesus given thus far, briefly explaining each, and dwelling especially on Peace and Good-will as being the Father's thought toward us, which he sent Jesus to reveal.

LESSON THOUGHT: Seeing Jesus. [This opportunity should not be let pass of teaching the personality of the Holy Spirit. He speaks now, to tell us what to do, as certainly as he spoke to Simeon, and he speaks to little children.]

1. Get children's ideas of a *good man.* Here is a description of one—"just" and "devout." Explain these terms and illustrate. God could speak to such a man, for he could hear. Why doesn't a deaf man hear? People talk, and he has ears, but his ears are not open. Simeon's ears were open to God because he was obedient. Tell that he was a very old man, and had heard that Jesus was coming to make all things right. He

wanted to see him before he died, and God had promised that he should.

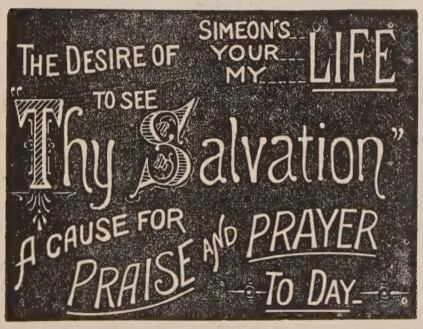
2. Explain why Jesus was brought to the temple, and by whom. Tell the story in simple words—the sweet young mother with her babe, and the father standing by; the old man coming in "by the Spirit," and seeing in the child the long-promised Deliverer; his joy, and his outburst of song and praise. Tell the children that we often see things without knowing what they are. Show some strange object, and tell that just as they see this, but do not know it, so many people see Jesus and do not know him. Simeon knew him because God opened his eyes to see him, and this was done because Simeon wanted to see him. God never lets any one be blind who wants to see Jesus. The eyes of our hearts must be opened by faith and prayer.

3. What Simeon saw. Ask what the children think he saw. He had just a little baby in his arms, nothing more! But this is the wonderful sight he saw. Make a cross on the board, and print his words: verse 30. How is Jesus our salvation? From what does he save? Who and what are our enemies? Who can be saved by Jesus?

Closing Exercise. Ask if any have seen Jesus, not with the outward, but with the inward eyes, and explain that only those truly see him who are trying to obey him. He tells us to be true, obedient, patient, kind, unselfish, loving, and helpful. If we are asking Jesus to save us from our heart-enemies, and to help us to be like him, then we do see him, and we shall go where he is by and by.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



Make the words "Thy Salvation" as prominent as the size of your board will allow. Do not write the words *your* or *my* beneath Simeon until you have spoken of the desire of Simeon's life. The application should be the aim and end of all Sabbath-school work, that is, spiritually to see Christ, through whom salvation is offered.

LESSONS FOR FEBRUARY, 1881.

Feb. 6. The Boyhood of Jesus; or, Filled with Wisdom. Luke 2. 40–52.

Feb. 13. Preaching of John the Baptist; or, Fruits of Repentance. Luke 3. 7–18.

Feb. 20. The Preaching of Jesus; or, Anointed to Preach the Gospel. Luke 4. 14–21.

Feb. 27. Christ Healing the Sick; or, The Power of the Lord. Luke 5. 12–26.

Sunday-School Management.

Why is it that so many Sunday-schools are more like a bear-garden than any thing else? Because of the want of attention to details in order and management, which are observed in all other assemblages and bodies of people. It has been too often thought, "It is only the Sunday-school, it will not matter." Is it a wonder, then, that the children also have thought the same, and considered it perfectly immaterial how they behaved? The teachers also are much more likely to be scrupulous in observing the rules of the school, such as keeping always to the right lesson, giving due notice when they are likely to be absent, or providing a substitute, etc., if the superintendent is scrupulous in observing their rights with the children; and he will then be able much more easily to get the teachers to understand this next point, namely, that they are personally responsible for the order in their classes. To this end, when requiring order or attention, and observing that he is not being obeyed by a child in any class where the teacher is present, he should, instead of calling attention to the child, call attention to the teacher of the class, requiring him to take the necessary steps to put the child in order. Teachers must understand that they are alone responsible for their classes.—*Church Sunday-School Magazine, London.*

Book Notices.

Marco Polo. His Travels and Adventures. By George Makepeace Towle. Boston: Lee & Shepard. A delightfully entertaining narrative of travel and adventure of six hundred years ago. Our young people will no doubt be deeply interested in the story of the great traveler as here told.

Over the Way; or, Ned Harris' Resolve. New York: National Temperance and Publication Society. The old story is here told over again, of poverty by drink, and affluence by temperance. It is a story we suppose that will need to be repeated in various forms for years to come. In the same book is a short and well-written story by Mrs. T. H. Griffith, called *Brave; or, Gospel Temperance.*

Montezuma and the Conquest of Mexico. By Edward Eggleston and Lillie Eggleston Seelye. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. This is an intensely interesting history of the old times of Spanish and Indian conflicts on this continent. Montezuma, the great chieftain, is the central figure of the story, and the struggle between his people and the Spaniards is graphically told.

The Gentle Heart. A Second Series of Talking to the Children. By Alexander Macleod, D.D. New York: Carter & Brothers. Twenty-one brief essays on various matters of deep importance are here given in a most attractive manner. Children and adults will alike be profited by the reading.

The Cup of Consolation; or, Bright Messages for the Sick-Bed, from the Two Great Volumes of Nature and Revelation. By an Invalid. With an Introduction by J. R. Macduff, D.D. New York: Carter & Brothers. A beautiful arrangement of texts from the Bible and extracts from some of the best writers, designed to bring light and comfort to the home of the afflicted. There are special texts and extracts for every day in the year.

A Year of Wreck. A True Story. By A Victim. New York: Harper & Brothers. We have here plainly and forcibly set forth some of the difficulties in the way of successful life at the South. The author faithfully tried the experiment, and, like many others, failed. It must be admitted, however, that one element in the failure was a want of good business-sense to begin with.

Historical Studies of Church Building in the Middle Ages. Venice, Siena, Florence. By Charles Eliot Norton. New York: Harper & Brothers. In this elegant and beautifully-printed octavo volume, we have a history of church architecture during the period named, which will be found interesting not only to theologians and architects, but to the general reader also. The various styles of mediæval architecture are described, and the religious feeling which gave them origin.

New Colorado and the Santa Fé Trail. By A. A. Hayes, Jun. New York: Harper & Brothers. That wonderful portion of our country called Colorado, with its mountains and mines, its mountaineers and miners, is in this book described in an attractive manner by one who knows whereof he writes. Years ago many of these statements would have been regarded as the vagaries of an enthusiast; now we are prepared to believe almost any thing of Colorado.

Colored Designs. Prepared Expressly for the International Sunday-School Lessons. Providence Lithograph Co., Providence, R. I. A sheet of stout paper, 32x46 inches, is used for each lesson. On this are printed, in bright and attractive colors, various emblems and words, together with the Golden Text for the Day. It bears a general resemblance to our "Leaf Cluster," though the printed matter for teachers is not on the leaf, but in a little paper called *The Blackboard and Crayon.* The price of the designs and the paper explanatory is $10 a year.

Bricks Without Straw. A Novel. By Albion W. Tourgee, LL.D. New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert. Judge Tourgee in his former books, especially "The Fool's Errand," has won a wide reputation as a writer of great clearness and dramatic power. This reputation is well preserved in this volume. It deals with some of the most serious problems brought before the people of this country by the late war of rebellion. The characters are portrayed with a master hand, though we should be better pleased if some of them indulged less in profanity.

Golden Days is the name of a paper published in Philadelphia, intended especially for the young. It is profusely illustrated. Its articles are original and well-adapted to young people. The Rev. Dr. D. P. Kidder prepares every week a careful exposition of the international Sabbath-school lesson. The well-known ability, the scholarship, the long experience of Dr. Kidder in writing for the young, are sufficient guarantees of success. Parents desiring something wholesome, high-toned, and useful for growing boys and girls, should order a specimen copy of *Golden Days* of the publisher, James Elverson, Philadelphia.

Whisper Songs for January.

FIRST LESSON.

O Angel of the Lord, draw near,
Speak to our hearts to-day;
And bid us haste with willing feet
To make for Christ a way.

SECOND LESSON.

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
For holy is his name;
His mercy is to us made known,
From age to age the same.

THIRD LESSON.

Thou, child, a Prophet shalt be called,
To go before the face
Of Him who comes to rule the world
With holy truth and grace.

FOURTH LESSON.

Fear not, for unto us this day
The angels come to bring
Good tidings of great joy to all,—
The birth of Christ, our King!

FIFTH LESSON.

Lord, let thy servant die in peace,
According to thy word;
For now mine eyes have seen thy light,
The glory of the Lord!

LESSONS FOR 1881.

First Quarter.

Jan. 2. **Zacharias and Elisabeth**..Luke 1. 5–17.
9. **The Song of Mary**... .....Luke 1. 46–55.
16. **Prophecy of Zacharias**...Luke 1. 67–79.
23. **The Birth of Jesus**.....Luke 2. 8–20.
30. **Simeon and the Child Jesus**.....Luke 2. 25–35.
Feb. 6. The Boyhood of Jesus....Luke 2. 40–52.
13. Preaching of John the Baptist.....Luke 3. 7–18.
20. The Preaching of Jesus...Luke 4. 14–21.
27. Christ Healing the Sick..Luke 5. 12–26.
Mar. 6. Witness of Jesus to John.Luke 7. 19–28.
13. The Sinner's Friend.....Luke 7. 36–50.
20. First Quarterly Review.
27. Missionary Lesson.....Luke 9. 1–6.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL JOURNAL

Is published Monthly by Phillips & Hunt, at New York, and Walden & Stowe, at Cincinnati.

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